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DREAM WORLD

AUGUST 1957 VOL. 1 NO. 8



HIS TOUCH TURNED STONE TO FLESH

—The Secret of Creation Was His

THE MAN WHO COULDN'T LOSE

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OF MEN AND DREAMS—

There are those who will scornfully tell you day dreaming is a waste of time. Pay them no heed. The man who does not dream denies his own imagination and can look forward only to bleak tomorrows.

There are those who will righteously tell you the dreamer and the doer are opposites; the negative and the positive; the drone and the worker. Reject this canard. For what laborer on a skyscraper, a bridge, a superhighway, is not bringing some man's dream into visible form?

There are those who will tell you a dreaming mind is an idle mind. Turn away from them. For every manifestation of man's powers on this earth budded first in wishful reverie. Edison, Ford, Leonardo da Vinci, Abraham Lincoln, were dreamers all.

Actually, no man, woman, or child can pass through a single wakeful day without motivating unnumbered dreams. *I wish I had a better job.* This is a day dream. *I wish I could meet that girl getting off the bus.* This is a day dream. *I wish I could walk into that bank and come out with enough money to pay my bills.* This is wishful thinking and such is the fabric from which all dreams are woven.

And what is a day dream other than the vicarious wielding of incredible powers? Incredible? Perhaps that isn't the word, because an ancient and honored saying gives all powers a validity: *What man can imagine, man can do.*

So perhaps the various powers you, as the reader, will wield in this magazine are not as incredible as they may appear.

And one more thing—I'm not going to welcome you into *Dream World* even if you are a new reader of our magazine. That isn't necessary. You and I and all of us have been here all our lives.

—PWF

DREAM WORLD

AUGUST 1957
Volume 1 Number 3

ZIFF-DAVIS PUBLISHING COMPANY
William B. Ziff (1898-1953) Founder
Editorial and Executive Offices
366 Madison Avenue
New York 17, New York

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HIS TOUCH TURNED STONE TO FLESH

By ADAM CHASE

Would you like the power to give life? to touch the statue of Aphrodite and transform it into a warm, glowing woman? You'd have to be careful though. You might have a frantic female chasing you. After all, a statue has no morals.

IT WAS Mitzi's dress that started it.

Or rather, the way Mitzi filled her dress. At the time, of course, he didn't even know her name was Mitzi. He knew her only as the girl who lived in the next apartment, who apparently lived alone, who had the kind of figure that seemed to have leaped from the glossy stock of an *Esquire* pinup, and who, close up, standing in his doorway with hands on hips and a faint frown on her face and her chest thrust out at him, made him guiltily glad that his wife Beverly had left the



This was a fine



time to start a fight, Mitzi thought.

day before yesterday for her Bar Harbor vacation.

"Yes, Miss—uh—?" he began. His name was Ralph Harper, he couldn't take his eyes from the startling, overall effect.

"Call me Mitzi," the girl said with an ingenuous smile on her face. "I—well, Mr. Harper, I was wondering what in heaven's name all that racket in here was."

"Sculpting," Ralph Harper answered promptly but with marked shyness.

"Oh?" A lilt of interest raised Mitzi's voice. "You're a sculptor?" She smiled. "That thing in your hand looks like something a second-story man might use."

"It's an adze. I guess my banging away in there was making too much noise. I'm sorry. You see, usually my wife reminds me to lay off around eleven at night, but since she's away—"

"Oh, how nice!"

Ralph Harper blinked twice as he did a double-take. "What did you say?"

"How nice—that is, how nice that she tells you when it's time to lay off."

"Oh." Ralph smiled weakly and felt a faint flush of color on his cheeks. He was thirty-one years old, had been mar-

ried for eight years, had never been unfaithful to his wife Beverly, whom he loved, and had never even thought ruttishly about another woman, until now.

"What are you making?" Mitzi asked. She had made no move to leave the doorway. Nor had Ralph invited her in. Awkwardly he suggested, "Er, want to take a look?"

She ogled him, then smiled. "Showing a girl your etchings, Mr. Harper? My gosh, you're a fast worker."

"Ha-ha," said Ralph Harper nervously. He followed her into his apartment and shut the door. She walked with a tight control to her hipswing, a control which Ralph Harper found far more seductive than the loose and flabby abandon practiced by some women.

They entered a large living room which had been remade into a studio. Sculpting was Ralph Harper's hobby. He had always been very good with his hands and had preferred something more creative than the usual basement workshop to keep them busy when he wasn't at his engineer's drafting board. The answer was sculpting, although Ralph was first to admit he was far from a first-rate artist.

Mitzi swung around with

an expectant smile on her face. "Where—?" she began.

Ralph, who was lost in thought and still a little self-conscious over the way he was attracted to the girl who couldn't have been more than twenty-one, didn't realize she stopped and turned. He bumped into her. Front to front. Delightfully.

He blushed. Mitzi went on smiling. She put her hand on his hand. His hand tingled and he withdrew it so suddenly that Mitzi lost her balance and fell toward him. He caught her, and for an instant found himself actually holding her in his arms. She was wearing a subtle fragrance she probably had paid for by the drop. It made Ralph feel like a satyr. She also wore a bare-backed summery dress with a scoop neckline, three-inch heels which made her as tall as Ralph, and no stockings.

Ralph backed away. "It—it's over there," he said. His voice, which he usually prided himself on, came out as a nervous squawk. He pointed to the unfinished statuette of a woman fighting her way out of her girdle. *Lady Wrestler*, he called it. Originally he had thought the idea was very funny, but somewhere along the line it had gone sour and

he was tired of the foot-tall statuette which, somehow, he had not been able to imbue with that indefinable something which sculptors refer to as "life"—a quality of seeming to be real.

Mitzi surveyed it with a pensive pout on her pretty face. "You mean, you were making all that noise just to carve a few more lines in—in that thing?"

"You don't like it?"

"Well, it's so small. Haven't you ever thought of working life-size?"

"The marble," Ralph pointed out, "costs a small fortune. Also, there's the problem of inadequate floor support," he added somewhat pedantically. "A block of life-size marble weighs tons."

"Umm-mm. Well, I'd think it would be more fun." She grinned at him, taking his hand. His pulse pounded when her fingers closed on his wrist. "Thirsty?" she asked. It was a warm July night, and there wasn't a breath of air in the apartment.

"And how," said Ralph.

"Come on to my place, then. I can make you a drink."

Ralph scowled at the way his heart leaped in his chest. Here it was only two days since Beverly had left the

city, and already he had visions of himself making out with the cute little trick in the next apartment. Hell's bells, he thought, you love Beverly, don't you? Yes, he loved Beverly. It had nothing to do with loving Beverly. He was crazy about roast prime ribs of beef, but he didn't throw boiled lobster out of his plate. He was crazy about Beverly, but he wouldn't throw Mitzi out of his . . . whoa, boy! he thought. She hasn't invited you in *there* yet. But he grinned while Mitzi stared at him, waiting for his answer. She made him feel so—so over-poweringly masculine. He had read somewhere that all husbands were potential philanderers; all they needed was the opportunity. And, naturally, he had seen *The Seven Year Itch*. His was an *eight* year itch, and nine if you counted the year of courtship with Beverly prior to their marriage a long time . . .

"Well?" Mitzi asked, wetting her lips with a pink tongue.

Ralph opened the door with a flourish. "*Apres-vous,*" he said, and down the hall they went.

After their third drink in Mitzi's apartment the girl

abruptly asked, "Why don't you do a statue of—me?"

"You? Er, you, Mitzi?"

"Sure. Life size, of me. Why not?"

"I never worked life size before."

"Did you ever do a woman?" Mitzi asked.

"No, not really."

"What do you mean?"

How's about *Lady Wrestler* inside?" Mitzi smiled. They were seated on the sofa in her living room. Ralph's head was wrapped around three martinis, and spinning. Mitzi went on: "Surely your wife must have modeled for it."

"My wife!" gasped Ralph, outraged. "Why Beverly has the figure of an eighteen-year-old who—"

"Cool off, Ralph, I was just pulling your leg. And, incidentally, never talk to one gal about another gal's figure. It just isn't done. The other gal might want to prove a point or two of her own."

Ralph didn't say anything.

Mitzi slid on the sofa, rearranging herself comfortably. Her dress hiked up a few inches, and Ralph stared. She had perfect legs, and even an amateur sculptor like Ralph knew they would be a real challenge to his adze, his mallet, and his chisel.

"You serious?" Ralph ask-

ed. "About doing a life size of you?"

"You're darned right I'm serious!"

"I—I was just thinking of the possibilities. I, er, know a place . . . nope. Too far."

"Where is it?"

"Forget it," Ralph said.

"No. Tell me."

"It's an old bungalow down in Manhattan Beach. It has a concrete block floor which would hold anything."

"That sounds perfect!" Mitzi came closer. There was suddenly a fourth drink in Ralph's hand. The supple warmth of Mitzi's flank was against his side. He drank. Mitzi went around and around, and settled, alighting almost weightlessly, her lips on his lips. At least he thought so. It might have been a rutish daydream brought on by too much liquor. He thought he was responding, tentatively, like a husband who has outdone the *Seven Year Itch* with an *Itch* of his own.

"Well?" Mitzi whispered. She had to disengage lips to do it. Her face was so close, Ralph couldn't focus on it.

Ralph didn't answer at first. The liquor had drugged him, the warm weight of Mitzi against him was something he didn't want to forego

because of an ill-chosen word, and Ralph didn't know what to say.

Mitzi urged: "I'll rent the place. I'll pay for the marble. All you have to do is sculpt. Well?"

"Mitzi, I—"

"If you have any qualms, don't answer right away."

He didn't answer right away. She browsed on his face. He browsed on hers, and elsewhere. They got into a more comfortable position on the sofa, although still not a dangerous one from the point of view of compromising anyone's anything.

Mitzi said, "We—ll?"

Ralph said, "Yes, I'll do it!" He blurted the words because in another moment they would have gone beyond the point of no return and half of him struggled against this because of his marriage and the way he felt about Beverly while the other half did because somehow, subconsciously, he sensed that Mitzi had arranged the whole thing, coming in to complain halfheartedly about the noise, then talking about his hobby, then inviting him in here, in order to get him to do a life size statue of her for some reason he didn't understand.

Mitzi looked up at him. He

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blinked. She was on the floor, her upswept blonde hair was messed, but she was smiling. Apparently he had answered her affirmatively and sat up so suddenly that he upended her.

He lurched to his feet and reached down to help Mitzi to hers. Just then the doorbell rang.

"I wonder who that can be?" Mitzi said unconvincingly.

She got up. As she went to the door, Ralph looked around wildly and with an unnecessarily melodramatic inclination to find somewhere to hide. After all, he told himself, calming down, so what if you're found here? An innocent drink or two. Or three or four or more. And a little kissing—after all, eight years with the same woman was a long time. He'd almost forgotten what it was like to make a conquest. But, nosiree, he hadn't lost the old technique. An hour, no more, and he had the prettiest filly in the apartment building making bedroom eyes at him. Add the sophistication he had now, he thought, to his old youthful enthusiasm, and he'd be a twentieth century Don Juan.

But wait a minute, he thought. If she had arranged

all this, don't go patting yourself on the back.

He stood up, suddenly remembering to dab at the lipstick on his face with a handkerchief. He scrubbed. The handkerchief came away red. He watched Mitzi's magnificent walk as she went to the door. If, somehow, in his statue, he could manage to capture, frozen for a moment out of time, the fluid seductiveness of that walk, it would be a masterpiece. A work that every sculptor dreams of.

Mitzi opened the door. A small homely man overdressed for a summer night in New York or anywhere tipped his derby hat at her and came into the apartment. He was quite a nondescript fellow pushing middle-age, except for his eyes. He had amazing eyes, even from across the room. They seemed to bore into Ralph and through him and, somehow frighteningly, back into him from behind, as if they could strip away scalp and skull and leave his brain naked.

"This is the—uh—artist?" the little man with the incredible eyes asked.

Ralph felt a sinking sensation. Then it *had* all been planned after all.

"Is he any good?" the little man demanded.

"I'm no expert," Mitzi admitted. "Middling, I guess."

"Yes, to be sure. Middling. Will he go ahead with it?"

"I think so."

"Splendid. Then you'll leave us alone now. It will take about an hour, Miss Hunter."

"No," Mitzi said. "I want to watch, if you don't mind."

"As you wish."

Mitzi said: "Ralph Harper, I'd like you to meet Mr. Ovid Nearing."

Ralph offered his hand, wishing he hadn't drunk so much. He was aware of Ovid Nearing's rather limp handshake and of the fact that Mitzi had turned off all the lights in the living room except one, something which she hadn't done while they were necking.

Ovid Nearing's reedy voice said: "You are now being commissioned to do a life-sized statue of Miss Hunter. You understand?"

"Of course I understand. But—"

"Then listen carefully. Carefully. Yes, carefully." All at once, unexpectedly, the reedy voice of Ovid Nearing became the most soothing sound Ralph had ever heard. It was lulling, as a gentle surf is lulling with the hot sun

beating down on your eyelids. It was lulling, and then it was suspiciously lulling—but by then, of course, Ralph Harper had been hypnotized. Afterwards, he wasn't to remember the conversation which followed, but it went like this:

"You are an artist who sculpts in stone, Mr. Harper? Answer me. Please answer all my questions. But remain in a sleep. Remain in a very deep sleep, please. Yes, that is fine."

"It's only a hobby," Ralph said.

"Yes, but you understand an artist's problems, Mr. Harper. The big challenge for an artist, the big challenge down the centuries for an artist working in any medium, has been the challenge of life. If somehow an artist could manage to reproduce life in his work, heightening it perhaps, giving it significance, but reproducing it none the less, he would have achieved more than any artist before him in the history of all the arts."

"But," came Ralph's hypnotized voice, "that's impossible."

"Impossible? Nothing is impossible, Mr. Harper," Ovid Nearing assured him. "You are to remember that when you awaken: nothing is impossible. Or, the impossible is

precisely that which the serious artist strives for. And yes, yes Mr. Harper, they have come close, our greatest artists, to reproducing life. A painting by Rembrandt—doesn't it all but breathe life with its perfect reproduction of darkness and light? Or, what was it the writer Hemingway said—that all his life he had tried, and failed but only by a narrow margin, to create a fifth dimension in fiction writing, a dimension in which fiction, somehow, would come to life?

"I tell you, Ralph Harper, this is *not* impossible! But of course, an artist must believe he can do it."

Ralph said, "I'm not even a very good sculptor."

"Foolish man, that doesn't matter. If you have the intent, the understanding—and, most of all, if you believe. . . ."

Ovid Nearing's voice wove a dream, a spell, almost like some medieval incantation, summoning hidden depths of understanding and faith which Ralph never knew he possessed. For a few minutes, the conflict of remaining a good husband and re-asserting his eight-years-on-the-marital-treadmill manhood was forgotten. Ovid Nearing's incantation, merging metaphys-

ics, the oldest of the sciences, and psychology, one of the newest, contained the following:

"All through the ages, Ralph Harper, man has played with the idea of an atomic world. Lucretius and Democritus started it, thousands of years ago. There were atoms and void, they said. Everything was atoms and void." Ralph didn't know what atoms and void had to do with making a statue that lived, but, being hypnotized, he listened with interest. "Atoms and void, Mr. Harper. The sum total of the universe. But what are atoms? Particles of positively, negatively and neutrally charged energy! Electricity—or, more accurately, electro-magnetic vibration."

"This atomic theory was proven in the physical sciences, Mr. Harper. I don't have to tell you of fission and thermonuclear experiments. The physical world is, as the ancients thought, atoms and void."

"Electromagnetic particles, and space. And nothing more. And what of the psychic world, Mr. Harper? Why shouldn't it be the same? If the ancients were right about the physical world, astonishingly right, Mr. Harper, why

not the psychic world as well? Atoms—the particles of matter. Or, if you prefer, electrons and protons. Photons—the tiny energy particles of light. Neutrons—the positive electrons which make atomic power possible. Neutrinos—the neutrally charged subatomic particles which some physicists claim are the binding force of the inter-atomic world. Ergs, Mr. Harper—discrete particles of energy. Atoms and void, Mr. Harper. You understand? You understand?

"I now give you—the lifeton, the ultimate living particle, the particle of life. Solve its mysteries and you will have solved the mysteries of life to their deepest depth. What is a protein, Mr. Harper? A complex carbon-hydrogen molecule, that is all. And what is life? Its a protein molecule—with the unknown lifeton added. Ergs for energy, photons for light, lifetons for life!

"That is what the artist has sought down through the ages—the lifeton. But the trouble with all artists *until you*, Mr. Harper, was that they strove to duplicate life in outward appearance, rather than to reproduce it internally and externally, reproduce it in every way, so

that what they create is as real as life itself because it *is* life—because, in short, lifetons go into its composition.

"If an artist believes this, he has the power over life. If you believe—but of course you will believe, since I am hypnotizing you to do so. Henceforth, Mr. Harper, you have the power of the lifeton in your fingertips. It is not strange. It is the most natural thing in the world—if you believe. For the space of the universe is filled with subatomic particles of which we know nothing, the cosmic rays. Harness them as the laws of nature harness them and they give solidity and weight to matter by becoming atomic particles, energy to motion by becoming ergs, a different form of energy to light by becoming photons, and life to the living by becoming lifetons.

"They're not merely at your fingertips, Mr. Harper—they're at everyone's. Any man, if he believed as you will believe, could create life—provided he had the ability to make a roughly lifelike object into which the lifetons could flow. Then, the lifetons will do the rest. You understand? You are a transmitter, Ralph Harper. A transmitter—or, if

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you prefer, a transformer. Cosmic rays to lifetons. Stone—to life! You can do it. You will do it!”

There was a pause. Ovid Nearing glanced at Mitzi, whose face was covered with a patina of sweat. She smiled at him shyly. He said, “Awaken, Ralph Harper. Awaken and remember nothing of what I have told you about the lifetons. But awaken with their power in your fingertips. Now, very well, you are awake!”

Ralph yawned, opening his eyes. “I guess I kind of conked out on you,” he said apologetically. “Liquor . . . hot night . . . you know. Forgive me, Mr. Nearing. Did you want to tell me something?”

Ovid Nearing and Mitzi exchanged glances. “It can wait,” Nearing said. “I understand, though, that you are going to do a statue of this girl, starting tomorrow.”

“Well, I didn’t say I’d actually . . .”

“Didn’t you?”

Why not? Ralph found himself thinking. Heck, yes, why shouldn’t he do it? He stole a glance at Mitzi. She smiled at him. He could taste her lipstick on his lips. He hardly thought of Beverly at

all. He didn’t remember thinking that his meeting with Mitzi had been arranged. He thought of it all as having happened because he was still an A-1 operator, despite eight years of domesticity. He felt like pounding his chest and strutting. He was an operator, all right. An operator, in a sculptor’s studio, with a gorgeous girl . . .

“Sure,” Ralph said. “Sure, I did.” He gave Mitzi the address of the Manhattan Beach house with the concrete slab floor. He told her where the marble could be obtained. And he added:

“Er, how would you like to pose?”

Mitzi looked at Mr. Nearing, who shrugged almost imperceptibly.

Mitzi said, laughing, “You tell me, you’re the doctor.”

Ralph felt a hot flush in his throat and cheeks. He blurted, “Well, I never did a life study of a woman.”

“You mean, in the—uh—”

“Of course, if you don’t—”

“No, I didn’t say that,” Ralph, I’ll pose however you wish. Tomorrow, then? Manhattan Beach? I can get a week off from work, if you can.”

A week off, Ralph thought. Beverly had practically beg-

ged him to take some time off, at least a week, and join her up at the Harbor. He’d been too busy, though. That’s what he’d said. He looked at Mitzi. She was the most attractive girl he had ever known. She stirred him even more than Beverly had during their courtship. She was the embodiment of the wild oat he had never sowed. He said:

“Yes, I can take a week off. I’ll meet you out at Manhattan Beach tomorrow morning.”

He practically ran from the apartment before he could change his mind.

“Well, what do you think, Ovid?” Mitzi asked Mr. Nearing after Ralph had gone.

“It will work.”

“It sounds so—fantastic.”

“You have nothing to lose, my dear.”

“That’s true. You said I get a thousand for posing for him—and twenty-five thousand if it works. If the statue—comes to life. Is that correct?”

“You’re very businesslike,” Ovid Nearing said in a disappointed voice.

“What did you expect, Ovid? I know how you feel about me. I just can’t respond to you. You know that. So if you really think this strange

lifeton idea of yours can turn a statue of me into a living creature . . .”

“Into a replica of you, my dear!”

“All right. Into a replica of me then. But I can’t believe you really gave Ralph Harper this power.”

“I didn’t give him anything, don’t you understand that? It was latent in him. It is latent in all artists, all painters, writers, musicians, sculptors. Its why they’re able to create art at all. Its the ability to create life, incompletely realized, latent within them. But if, subconsciously, they have faith that this latent force they possess can be realized completely. . . .”

Mitzi didn’t answer. She poured herself a drink. She hadn’t drunk with Ralph because she’d wanted to remain sober and alert. Now she needed the drink. Her identical twin—carved from hard cold marble, and brought to life? It didn’t seem possible—and yet, and yet . . .

Ovid Nearing was a moderately famous scientist, a physical chemist at New York University. He was a sober, prosaic man. He was so sober and prosaic, in fact, that his courtship bored her. They had met at a party and for Ovid Nearing it had been love at

first sight. Not only did he bore her, he didn't have enough money. Then he had talked to her about this life-ton scheme and she had thought immediately, why not? I have nothing to lose, I make a thousand dollars if he's wrong and twenty-five thousand if he's right. Of course, having an identical twin who's born full grown at the age of twenty-one is liable to be a complicated thing, but . . .

But there was a lot of money in it for her, and Ovid Nearing would get out of her hair.

"Good night," he said. He didn't drink with her. He never drank. She closed the door behind him and got undressed for bed, thinking of Ralph Harper, who, at this moment, possibly had the power of life in his fingertips.

Ralph, in his apartment next door, scowled at *Lady Wrestler*. She wasn't really a wrestler, of course. She was a twelve inches high statuette, almost completed, of a plump and even somewhat frowzy woman wearing nothing but a girdle into which she was trying to wriggle her ample buttocks without too much success.

Ralph grinned. It was

about the best thing he'd ever done, and he thought it was pretty funny. Beverly had told him, watching him at work a couple of days ago, before she left for Bar Harbor: "If you tell anyone you've modeled that from life, and I was the model, I'll get a divorce." Naturally, she didn't mean it, he hadn't modeled it from life, and if he'd had, Bev certainly wouldn't have been the model, since Bev had a trim girlish figure which would draw whistles on the street even if it wasn't in the same class with Mitzi Hunter's incredible curves.

"Hey, *Lady Wrestler*," Ralph said, satisfied with himself and his work and trying to take his mind off the Beverly-Mitzi conflict, "you're just about a finished product, you know it? Just a little polishing over here . . ."

He touched *Lady Wrestler's* small, upthrust hip where it was thrust out angularly above the top of the too-tight girdle.

He stepped back, startled. He had felt something vaguely like a mild electric shock tingle through his fingertips. Static electricity, he thought. He reached out experimentally to touch *Lady Wrestler* again.

But he couldn't because at

that moment she jumped awkwardly off her small pedestal and alighted, almost falling over, on the tabletop.

Ralph's eyes bulged. The first thing he thought of was the DT's. But you don't get DT's from a few drinks. You get them from years of overdrinking and a consequently inadequate diet. He blinked. *Lady Wrestler* was still there on the tabletop. He had carved her from pink Tennessee marble. She was flesh colored, with a slight sunburn. She was only a foot high, but otherwise a very realistically formed woman of forty or so with a club-womanish face and a hairdo which looked as if it stood for the better part of somebody's forty-hour work week.

She stared up at Ralph angrily. He had made her staring down, with the same angry look, at her too tight girdle. She said in a shrill, piping voice:

"If you had to make me wearing the darned thing, at least you could have made me one that fit!"

She struggled with the girdle. It wouldn't go on. There was a napkin on the table. She cloaked herself with it, while Ralph watched, open-mouthed. There was a considerable amount of

writhing. The napkin swirled. Off came the girdle. *Lady Wrestler* smiled in relief, still cloaking her miniature nudity with the linen napkin.

"That's much better," she said.

Ralph managed a croak which might have been, "Who . . . are . . . you?"

It probably was, and *Lady Wrestler* probably understood, because the series of croaks brought a giggle and the answer: "Why, you made me. You called me *Lady Wrestler*, but that isn't my name. That's just a joke, as you know. My name is Matilda - Jane - Marie - Gertrude - Phyllis - Harriet - Abby."

"I beg your pardon?"

"Those were the names of the women who formed the composite you unconsciously carved me to look like. Matilda jerks sodas at the luncheonette near your office, Jane is the girl at the pants pressers, Marie is a receptionist at your dentist's office. . . ."

"O.K. Don't tell me the rest of it, just tell me how you *know* all that, and how you—well—how you *happened*, when of course you couldn't possibly happen."

"Oh, couldn't I?" Matilda-

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Jane - Marie - Gertrude - Phyllis - Harriet - Abby shrilled up at him. "A fat lot you artists know. You created me. With lifetons and all. So here I am. You can believe your own eyes, can't you?"

Instead of answering that—since an answer seemed to lead toward the brink of madness—Ralph asked: "What am I going to do with you?"

"You could," Matilda-Jane Etc. suggested with a sniff, "exhibit me. Were I life size, you might have difficulty convincing people you'd sculpted me from pink Tennessee marble, but I'm only twelve inches tall. They'll have to believe you."

"Yes," said Ralph. "But I don't want to be exhibited!"

"No," said Ralph. "You made me practically naked," Matilda-Jane said accusingly. "The first thing you ought to do is sew me some clothing. Can you sew?"

Ralph said he could not. Matilda-Jane settled for a second napkin. An artful use of both of them gave her a presentable white-on-white cape and skirt.

Matilda-Jane perched her plump figure on the edge of the table. "All right," she

said, pouting. "You made me. Now make me happy. I want a friend. Man or woman, I don't care. Just so it's my size."

Ralph, in a daze, found a chunk of Tennessee marble in his storeroom. It was considerably smaller than Matilda-Jane, but it would have to do. Ralph worked feverishly. His hands flew. The adze cut deeply into the small chunk of marble, the hammer and chisel did their work more delicately, the polishing stones more delicately still.

Matilda-Jane oo'd and ah'd all night long. Ralph didn't think about her. He couldn't think about her, not yet. That was why he worked so hard on the second statuette. It was a little boy, eight inches high and ten years old. It was a pretty good job, considering Ralph's haste.

When dawn was brightening the windows, he was finished. He had carved the little boy in an appropriate summer costume, shorts and a T-shirt, shoes and socks. The boy was smiling.

"Touch him," Matilda-Jane said, her face rapt.

"Touch him?"

"Yeah, just touch him."

Ralph was exhausted, mentally as well as physically. He touched a fingertip to the

boy-statuettes. He felt the now-familiar tingling. The tiny boy stretched and stood up.

"Sonny!" cried Matilda-Jane.

They ran to each other, and embraced.

Life, Ralph Harper was thinking. I touch stone, and it comes to life. Me, Ralph Harper.

He took a drink. He felt numb now, a numbness in his entire being. The drink did nothing for him.

I touch stone, he thought. And it comes to life.

Power. Power over life.

Power such as no man had ever had in the history of the world. Why? Why me? he wondered.

He thought of the greatest statues of the greatest sculptors in the history of that art-form, and wondered what they would have to say, what wonderful secrets they could tell, if they came alive. About Michelangelo, or Phidias . . .

He thought of Mitzi Hunter, of whom he was going to do a life size nude.

Which, as far as he knew, he had the power to bring to life merely by touching her with his fingertips.

He took another drink. He

shuddered, suddenly cold despite the warmth of the night.

It was the most incredible gift a man could receive, although he had apparently plucked it out of thin air. Incredible, yes. Wonderful, yes. But he wished Bev was there with him. He wished he could confide in her, ask her advice. He could turn stone to flesh. He was afraid.

Utterly exhausted, he fell asleep, dressed, in his chair.

When he awoke several hours later, the door was slightly ajar.

He looked all over the apartment for Matilda-Jane and Sonny. He called them, feeling a little foolish. Either he imagined the whole thing, or they had gone.

Because he couldn't find them anywhere.

When Ralph got to the bungalow in Manhattan Beach late the next afternoon, Mitzi was waiting for him.

"Well," she said, "I almost thought you weren't going to show up."

Ralph looked around. In the center of the unfurnished living room was a block of blushing pink Tennessee marble. About ten feet away was a small model's platform.

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Mitzi had also installed a screen for modesty's sake. And light streamed into the room from a hole in the ceiling.

"Tell me what happened up there?" Ralph asked.

"Oh, that. It's going to be a skylight, but they haven't put it in yet. It will be put in tonight, so it won't interfere with our work. Meanwhile, this being a nice sunny day in mid-July, even though it's kind of late in the afternoon, can we get started? After all, I only have a week."

Ralph only had a week, too. Mr. Jamison, his foreman at the engineering division of the plant, had been surprised when he asked for the week off during the height of the emergency over the government contract. But in the end, Ralph—who hadn't taken a vacation in almost two years—had won his point.

All of this seemed unreal, because Ralph couldn't get his mind off Matilda-Jane and Sonny. He couldn't simply have imagined them, yet they had apparently disappeared without a trace. . . .

He heard Mitzi's laughter, and her voice: "What are you staring off into space for?"

Ralph shook his head to clear it. He had brought his

adze, mallet and chisel in a small leather bag, and now unpacked them. He was one of those amateur sculptors who preferred working directly on stone rather than from preliminary sketches.

"I won't be a minute!" Mitzi said, tripping behind the screen. She was wearing Bermuda shorts and a crew-necked blouse, both of which she filled to perfection. Her voice floated out from behind the screen: "You still want to do a life study, don't you?"

Pulses began to throb in Ralph's temples. When the cat's away, he thought, then groaned, wondering what Beverly would say if she could see him now. On the other hand, eight years *was* eight years, and besides—the thought came to him suddenly—how did he know what Bev was doing up at Bar Harbor? Sure, he went on with the idea, rationalizing, there were plenty of bachelors, and married men too, on the make at a resort like Bar Harbor. So how did he know that Bev wasn't in the process of, well, experimenting, in the same way that he was? How did he know that wasn't the reason she'd flown up to Bar Harbor in the first place? Bev had all the expected fe-

male impulses, just as he had all the expected male ones.

Bermuda shorts came floating over the top of the screen, to land on the floor inches from the crew-necked blouse. There was a pause—and a giggle.

Ralph looked up at the hole in the ceiling. They had perhaps two hours of really good light left. He looked at the screen. Mitzi was motionless behind it now.

Mitzi called, giggling again: "That's all."

"All? All what?"

In a disappointed voice: "I thought you'd be surprised, Ralph. That's all. All I'm wearing."

Two items of clothing. The shorts and the blouse. "But —" Ralph began.

"Well, it is summer, isn't it?" Another giggle.

Ralph, his heart hammering, took his position in front of the block of Tennessee marble. He waited. A slow flush crept up his neck and over his face. And then he heard the pad-pad-pad of Mitzi's bare feet, and really began to blush.

He squeezed his eyelids shut. Silence stretched out. Then Mitzi, in a coy voice, called: "Ralph, I'm ready. I'm ready, Ralph."

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The glue of modesty clung to his eyelids. He wasn't even thinking about his wild ability to turn stone to flesh, if it really existed and hadn't all been a dream. He was only thinking that Mitzi Hunter, the most beautiful girl he had ever seen, with the lushest, most perfect figure, was standing about ten feet away from him, with a lot of air and a shaft of sunlight for clothing.

He opened his eyes, riveting them to the pink Tennessee marble. He hefted his adze and began to chip away at the block. The flakes flew. He worked rapidly.

"But how do you want me to *stand*?" Mitzi asked.

The artist in Ralph remembered her perfect feminine walk. If he could capture her walk, he could capture the essence of her. He might not be a great sculptor, but he knew that much.

"Take a single long stride," he said, "and hold it."

"Like this, Ralph?"

He had to answer her, of course. In order to answer, he had to look. It wasn't that he didn't want to see Mitzi posing for a life study. He could think of few things he would want to see more. It was just that he feared his own reaction and definitely

did not want to make a fool of himself.

He turned his head slowly. He looked.

Mitzi was an incredible white and pink and tan dream. Ralph sighed. He dropped the adze and stooped for it. He began to chip away at the marble. His hands weren't steady. He lit a cigarette. Mitzi stood there in the act of walking, one long, perfectly formed leg out-thrust, emphasizing the curve of hip and the long line of thigh; the opposite arm swinging forward, the same arm swinging back and bringing the beautiful breast into prominence; the pelvis and hips curving in the act of walking; the lovely head high, with a Mona Lisa smile enigmatic but secure in its own beauty.

Ralph took a deep breath. His hands steadied as the artist in him took over. With the adze he began to chip the oblong block of marble, which stood on one of its small ends, into the rough semblance of a walking figure from the navel up. He liked working like that, concentrating first on one half of a study and leaving the other half in its matrix until he was ready to bring it forth. It gave him, somehow, a feeling of power.

After a while Mitzi complained, "Hey, how's about a ten-minute break, General? This modeling is something new to me. A gal can get tired."

Ralph mumbled an apology and put his adze down. "Shall I get your robe?" he asked, walking toward the screen to get it for her.

"Robe? What robe? Was I supposed—"

"Never mind," Ralph said. He went behind the screen and squatted on the floor there, Indian fashion, thus guaranteeing Mitzi's modesty, as much as you can guarantee the modesty of a gorgeous girl posing for a life study about ten feet from you.

He heard the padding of feet. He started to stand up, reddening. Mitzi appeared. She placed her hand on his shoulder and thrust him back down. "All I want is a cigarette," she said. He gave her one. She had to steady his hand to light it. She inhaled and blew a plume of smoke in his direction.

"You know," she said, "you're cute."

He swallowed the lump in his throat. She was sitting on her hams right alongside of him. He could have reached out and touched her. The worst part of it—or maybe

the best part of it—was that he wanted to.

Just then he heard footsteps. Someone had come into the unlocked bungalow.

"Hey! Anybody home?" a voice called.

"We're back here," Ralph answered automatically, then sprinted out from behind the screen to retrieve Mitzi's blouse and Bermuda shorts. Just as he picked them up, a man of about thirty-five came into the unfurnished room. He had tousled, thinning hair, long limbs, and a cynical smile on his face. Another man, short and plump, came in behind him. Ralph froze with the Bermuda shorts and crew-necked blouse clutched to his chest. The second man, the plump one, was carrying a press camera. There was a flash of light which indicated he had used it.

Ralph blinked. Two tiny creatures came into the room behind the pair of men who, obviously, were a reporter-photographer team.

"You Ralph Harper?" the reporter asked unnecessarily.

The tiny creatures were Matilda-Jane and Sonny.

"Panning's the name," the cynical-smiling reporter said. "I was out covering a story at dawn, and I almost ran your two—uh—friends here

down. They said you made them. I'm from Missouri, bus-ter. Well?"

Matilda-Jane piped: "We started to cross the street. We had no idea how big it would be, how long a walk for folks our size. Especially Sonny, he's only ten."

"You never should have left the apartment," Ralph admonished her. "You never should have taken little Sonny and—"

He stopped talking. His mouth fell open. Mitzi, still wearing air and sunshine, came out from behind the screen. She was staring raptly at Matilda-Jane. "Why that . . . that's *Lady Wrestler*!" she gasped. "Only yesterday she was a hunk of lifeless stone. You did it! You did it!" And she ran to Ralph, flinging her bare arms around him and her bare other things against him, and kissed him soundly on the lips. After all, it meant twenty-five thousand dollars to her.

The plump photographer's strobe unit brightened the room as he took a picture of their clinch. Ralph broke away. "Hey, give me that camera," he said, trying to say it ominously.

But Panning slipped quickly between him and the pho-

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tographer. "Just a minute, bucko," he said.

Mitzi took the Bermuda shorts and blouse from Ralph, and ducked behind the screen with them. In a moment she reappeared, clothed. She headed for the door. "Let me out of here," she said. "Me for a telephone!"

Panning barred her way. "Sister," he said, "this is our story. An exclusive, you get it?" He turned to Ralph. "You and Lady Godiva here aren't married, are you?"

"Why, er, no."

"I didn't figure you were. O.K., folks. We've got this picture of you. It's our guarantee that the story stays ours. Otherwise . . ."

"You can't print that picture!" Ralph cried out.

Panning made a deprecatory gesture. "Who wants to?" he said. "Unless you don't play ball. If you don't play ball, that's different."

Ralph groaned. "What do you want us to do?"

"Hey, Pete," Panning said. "Get a pic of him with the little ones, huh?"

Pete took his picture, which showed Matilda-Jane and Sonny comfortably nestled in the crook of Ralph's right arm. Then Panning said:

"According to the pint-sized dame, you made them out of—well, she says, marble. That right?"

Ralph admitted it.

"Then you touched them," Panning said, "according to her story, and they came to life."

"Yes, I know," Ralph said. "That's precisely how I did it."

Panning beamed. "And you can do it to anything? Anything at all?"

Ralph shook his head. "No, I don't think so. I think—well, I have a hunch I'm limited to stone statues. In fact I'm sure of it."

"Some limit," Panning scoffed while Pete nodded. "The world is full of stone statues." He beamed on Ralph. He beamed on Mitzi, and on Matilda-Jane and Sonny. He said, "Folks, you got yourselves a press-agent. You got yourself two of them."

"Yessir," said Pete.

"We'll make you the most famous world-celebrity since Winston Churchill retired," Panning vowed. "We'll put your picture on every . . . say, what's this? New statue, huh—and a big one?"

"It's going to be a life study of me," Mitzi said.

Panning leered. "That

right? I got to hand it to you, Harper."

"I told you he could do it," Matilda-Jane said.

Ralph said, "I don't want a press-agent. I don't want any publicity because, frankly, I don't know yet what to do with this strange power."

"Don't know!" wailed Mitzi, forgetting herself. "I'll tell you what you're going to do. You're going to make that statue of me, and make it come to life, so Ovid Nearing gives me twenty-five thousand dollars, that's what you're going to do."

But Ralph hardly heard her, and Panning certainly was preoccupied. He was musing: "Don't you see, Ralph boy? As fast as stone-makers can turn 'em out, you'll bring the statues to life. They won't be human in the eyes of the law, even if they look human. But if these two pint-sized folks here—no offense, m'am and sonny—are a sample, they'll not only look human but be able to perform any human function."

As if to prove it, little Sonny said, "Maw, I'm hungry."

"Human—but not human," Panning went on. "People could buy 'em and own 'em and make 'em do all the work, or perform, or . . . well, you

get the idea. All Pete and me want is, let's say, fifty percent."

"Let's say," Mitzi told him icily, "ten percent."

Ralph didn't say anything. He went into the kitchen and found a jar of jam in the refrigerator. He sniffed it. It smelled all right. He covered the tip of the spoon with jam and brought it back to Sonny. After all, since he had created them, he felt that Sonny and Matilda-Jane were his responsibility. Sonny tasted the jam by getting a fist-full off the tip of the spoon. He liked it, and began to eat.

"Well, maybe fifteen percent," Mitzi was saying, "but not a penny more."

Panning and Pete went into a huddle. "Listen," Ralph told Mitzi, "I haven't said I'd agree to anything."

"But don't you see, Ralph, honey," Mitzi pleaded, placing her arms around his neck, "Mr. Panning is right. Say the word, and you'll become the richest, most important man in the world. Panning and his friend deserve, oh, say fifteen percent anyway, for giving you the right kind of publicity. Then Ovid Nearing deserves another fifteen percent, because it was his theory that made all this pos-

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sible. That leaves—let me see—seventy percent for us.”

“Us? You mean, you and I?”

“Of course that’s what I mean, Ralph honey. If you want, it will be a purely business proposition. On the other hand, if you’d rather . . .”

Panning interrupted her with: “Hey, where does she figure in for half of seventy percent? Nobody needs her at all. That’s why I say, Mr. Harper, fifty percent for you and fifty for me and Pete here . . .”

“Over my,” shouted Mitzi, “dead body!”

Ralph put his hands to his head and groaned.

Mitzi and Panning began to shout at one another. In her shrill piping, little Matilda-Jane told still smaller Sonny that he’d had enough to eat. Outside somewhere, a fire engine, siren shrieking, was rushing to a fire. And plump Pete, awaiting the outcome of the argument, took a pint bottle from his hip pocket, uncorked it, and took a long drink.

“Hey, lay off that stuff,” Panning warned. “We got business to transact.”

Matilda-Jane was still shrilling at Sonny. The fire engine sped by outside. Pan-

ning and Mitzi began shouting again. Ralph cupped his hands over his ears and ran.

He didn’t stop until he had driven all the way home.

Pete the photographer was responsible for what happened next, but Ralph didn’t know that. When Panning and Mitzi couldn’t reach any mutually satisfactory agreement but settled for continuing the discussion over dinner, Pete returned to his bachelor apartment and finished the pint bottle by himself. An all-consuming curiosity possessed him afterwards, as it always did when Pete had had a few too many, so he took his Graphic and the undeveloped plates down to the *Star* building, where he developed the plates. In the graphic case he also had Panning’s hastily scribbled notes for a story—notes jotted down before Panning had decided there was a fortune in Ralph Harper and his wild talent.

There were four plates. The first showed Matilda-Jane and Sonny standing with the left front wheel of Panning’s car towering over them as a backdrop. The second showed Ralph, clutching Mitzi’s blouse and Bermuda shorts to his chest and looking bewildered. The third

showed Ralph holding Matilda-Jane and Sonny on his arm. The fourth showed Ralph and Mitzi, the latter wearing only Ralph’s arms, clinching.

Pete stared at the pictures. They were fine shots. Pete was a fine photographer. Nobody knew how fine, he thought. Nobody really appreciated him. For example, did that luscious babe go to dinner with him? She did not, she went with Panning, and only because Panning had the gift of gab. Well, wasn’t one picture worth a thousand words? Isn’t that what the philosophers had said?

He’d show them. He didn’t have one picture. He had *four* of them. And also, he had Panning’s notes which could be turned over to a clever rewrite man and which, along with the little Pete had to add, would make one heck of a fine story.

Pete looked at the plates again. They were dry now. He thought, self-pity engulfing him, that Panning’s plan wouldn’t have worked anyway. He again studied the plates. They were great. They might even get him a fifty-buck bonus. Fifty bucks in the hand is worth—how many millions on the bush? He leered drunkenly. It wouldn’t

have worked out. Not for him at any rate. He was just too unlucky.

He called a rewrite man, who was skeptical at first. But then Pete showed him the pictures. If nothing else could convince him the pictures did.

The next morning, Ralph awoke with a headache. He had taken the phone off the hook before he retired because he didn’t want Panning or Mitzi to bother him. He left it off the hook, showered, shaved, and dressed.

There were several small blocks of marble in the apartment, and Ralph was tempted to sculpt something—anything—and try his magic power again. But the more he thought of it, the less he liked the idea. Matilda-Jane and Sonny were already running around on the loose, Panning was trying to carve him up into financial sections, and gorgeous Mitzi—the hardest part of all to resist—would cheerfully enter an illicit liaison with him to attain her own ends.

Thinking all this over, Ralph sat down to a breakfast of toast and coffee. He had already decided to call Mr. Jamison and say he was going back to the plant to work. He didn’t want any

more of Mitzi and the rest of it.

Or did he?

Wasn't he washing his hands of all of it primarily because he couldn't trust himself?

He frowned, and bit into cold toast.

And the doorbell rang.

Ralph went to the door warily. He didn't know whom to expect, or why. "Yes?" he asked.

"Mr. Harper? Mr. Ralph Harper?"

Ralph admitted that much.

"My name is Onager, sir," the muffled voice came through the door. "I am the director of the New York Museum of Non-Objective Art. May I come in?"

Ralph opened the door reluctantly. Onager was a portly gentleman with a pince nez and an utterly bald dome of a head. He took Ralph's arm and said in a conspiratorial voice: "Quick, my young friend! We have to get out of here before the others come."

"Huh? Which others?"

"Haven't you seen the *Morning Star*, young man? The world—yes, the whole world—will be beating a path to your doorstep. But it isn't the whole world I'm worrying about: it's those phonies from

the Museum of Classical Art who claim that modern, non-objective art is inferior to their own decadent art-form. Naturally, we real artists know better, don't we?"

"Well," admitted Ralph while Onager groaned his despair, "to tell you the truth, I never really did understand non-objective art."

Onager rushed him downstairs and into a car.

"There he is!" someone shouted.

"There goes Ralph Harper!"

"Hey, wait for us!"

"Mr. Harper, will you endorse . . ."

"I have here in my hand for you to sign . . ."

"He's getting away!"

With a lurch, and with a sweating Onager behind the wheel and a dazed Ralph alongside him, the car sped away.

That morning, the Board of Directors of the Museum of Non-Objective Art had decided not to open their establishment to the public. Instead, they were waiting tensely for Director Onager to arrive with Ralph Harper. When he did so, Onager looking triumphant and Harper looking bewildered, they all commenced talking at once.

Ralph only shook his head. They went right on talking. Ralph was vaguely aware of being in a dim hall with monstrous, nightmare-ish shapes of non-objective sculpture all around him.

"Silence!" Onager roared. He had a voice like a bull's. The Board of Directors shut up to a man.

Onager said: "I'll put it to you simply, Mr. Harper. The Board of Directors of the Museum of Classical Art have, collectively and individually, always looked down their noses at us. This hurt, I can assure you, especially since the public, unable to comprehend non-objective art, has tended to patronize the Classical Art Museum in a ratio of eleven to one as against the Museum of Non-Objective Art, in which you now stand. You understand?"

Ralph nodded. The rest of the Board began to mutter, but Onager boomed for silence and continued:

"The public's big gripe against our form of art, my dear sir, is that it is not true to life. Our contention, of course, is that subjective truth, the inner truth seen by the unconscious mind or, if you will, the pre-conscious, is every bit as important as, if

not more important than, the merely objective truth available in every box camera photograph." Onager rubbed one of his rather large ears, and went on:

"Now, if non-objective art were not in its own way as true-to-life as objective art, then your strange power would not be able to bring it to actual life, correct?"

"Yes, I think so. But," gasped Ralph, "how did you know about my wild talent?"

"The *Morning Star*," Onager said. "It's in the *Star*, with wonderful photographs." Onager leered. "Your girl friend is quite a piece of . . ."

"She's not my girl friend!"

"Well, anyway, my dear sir, what we want you to do, here, today, in this museum, right now, is to bring to life a piece of non-objective sculpture, specifically, the statue awarded first prize in our recent nationwide contest. You'll do it?"

Ralph didn't answer. They waited breathlessly.

Then Onager said: "If you do, and if you are successful, we will mail you a check for five thousand dollars."

Ralph did not particularly want to bring another statue to life. It seemed a wonderful

talent, but it had brought him nothing but trouble so far. On the other hand, he thought dismally, with pictures of himself and Mitzi in the *Morning Star*, which he knew was mailed to Beverly up in Bar Harbor, he would need every penny of that five thousand dollars for a series of gifts to appease Beverly's fury, if appearing it were possible. So, while the Board of Directors, to a man, shouted bravo! as if Ralph had just brought down the curtain with an aria, if Ralph could have sung an aria, which obviously, he could not have, Ralph nodded his head and said he would do what they wished.

A member of the Board went to a wall switch and flooded the museum with light. Ralph found himself standing in a statue gallery which contained about a dozen incredible specimens of non-objective sculpture. There were flying things and sailing things and leaning things and falling things. All of them were enormous and none of them made any sense to him. Some of them, even, were oddly frightening, but perhaps that was because he knew he was about to attempt bringing one of them to life.

Onager took his arm and steered him toward one of the statues. It was one of the smaller figures in the room, a mere seven feet tall. It seemed to be carved of some speckled metallic rock. It had a placard hung from what apparently was its neck, and the placard said:

FIRST PRIZE, 1957 NON-
OBJECTIVE SHOW
YOUNG LOVE, FEMALE—
sculpted by
JEREMIAH H. BEAM, BRONX,
NEW YORK

Young Love, Female looked like a hatrack with a knob of a head, four groping arms, a scrawny neck, a single elongated and frozen-undulating torso-leg, and, of course, no clothing—except for a single black leather man's glove that clung to one of the groping arms.

"Isn't she magnificent?" Onager rhapsodized.

The other Board members agreed, clustering around all raving about *Young Love*.

Ralph looked up dubiously at *Young Love* on her pedestal. If he was right about his strange power, it would only work on something which was life-like. But was *Young Love* life-like? He didn't know. Subjectively, as Ona-

ger claimed, perhaps she was. And if she was . . .

"Don't you—ah—have to make passes at it or passes in air in front of it or something?" one of the Board members asked.

Ralph shook his head. Awe-struck, they watched him. A feeling of tremendous power, of unique power, possessed him. He, Ralph Harper, was going to bring stone to life, turn hard stone to soft, yielding flesh. A few minutes ago he had never wanted to use his power again, but that was ridiculous. Of course he would use it. Of course—

He approached *Young Love*.

Reaching up, he could barely touch the tip of her single leg-torso on the high pedestal.

His fingertips, tapping the powers of the universe, tingled.

"He—he's glowing like a neon sign!" one of the Board cried.

"So's the statue!"

"Yes, yes . . ."

"Look! It moves, it moves!"

Ralph stepped back.

Young Love came stiffly off her pedestal. Warily, the Board of Directors backed

away from the huge, towering figure. So did Ralph. But he couldn't get his eyes off the statue. Stone, hard stone. Non-objective. A hatrack wearing a man's glove. And he had brought it to life. . . .

Young Love, hopping on her one lower appendage, came toward Ralph.

She tripped.

She fell heavily, but not as hard stone would fall.

As flesh, which could bruise, would.

Young Love cried out.

And, before all their astonished eyes, changed.

The stone-flesh seemed to flow together, to coalesce, then to flow out again. *Young Love* shimmered, became indistinct. The nod of a head seemed to grow a face, and hair, and—

Onager roared: "Look!"

Where before the non-objective statue had been stretched out on the hard floor of the museum, an eighteen-year-old girl, seven feet tall and wearing only a man's leather glove on her right hand, was getting up and looking around in a daze.

Ralph hastily gave her his jacket, but it didn't reach much below her navel. One of the Board members, with an unexpectedly theatrical flourish, took down a hanging

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and presented it to her. *Young Love* cloaked her truly enormous but proportionate attributes.

She gazed fondly at Ralph. More than fondly. She said: "I love you."

Ralph backed away. *Young Love* followed him.

Neither Onager nor any of the others made a move to stop Ralph, who called out, "Don't forget my check. Mail it. I'm going to need it."

Onager suddenly seemed to snap out of his bemusement. "The statue," he said. "We can't let her get away. She's the living proof that non-objective art is, in its own subjective way, true to life." And, so saying, he went after *Young Love*.

Ralph had reached the door. He opened it. *Young Love*, a look of rapture on her face, made a lunge for him. Ralph slammed the door and ran.

Onager grabbed *Young Love's* arm. "Wait," he said. "You've got to stay here with us."

Young Love, who was seven feet tall, towered over him. "Silly man," she said, "let go of my arm."

But Onager wouldn't.

Until *Young Love*, coltishly exuberant but in a hurry to go after Ralph too, picked

him up and threw Onager about ten feet across the museum floor, where he alighted against the former pedestal of the former statue.

Then *Young Love* got out of there.

It was Director Onager who moaned, "What will Jeremiah Beam say when he finds out what happened to his statue?"

The Board of Directors helped Onager to his feet, and they all rush outside after *Young Love*.

But they didn't see her anyplace.

For a moment they looked at one another in despair. Then Onager asked, "What's the by-line on those photos in the *Star*?"

One of the Board members produced a folded sheet of newspaper. The name Pete Wombly was spoken. As many of the Board members as could squeeze in hailed a cab and headed downtown for the *Morning Star* building.

Meanwhile, Ralph sat on the edge of the back seat of his own cab, clutching the rear of the front seat.

"Can't you go any faster?"

"Mac, there's traffic laws in this city."

Ralph squirmed around to look through the rearview

mirror. There was another cab back there. It wasn't just any old cab. *Young Love*, penniless but perhaps quite capable of paying the driver with her own special coin, had commandeered it.

"I'll give you," Ralph promised, "five dollars extra if you shake that cab behind us."

The driver squinted up at his rearview mirror. It was a private cab behind him, not a member of a taxi fleet. He scowled, then shook his head.

"That cab, Mac? I couldn't lose it with a jet plane. That's Madman Sammy Schrunk. I know the guy. He's the fastest thing on wheels in the City of New York."

"At least try!"

The driver shrugged. "I can try," he agreed.

The tires squealed, the cab lurched up on two wheels for a sudden left turn. Horns blatted their mechanical dismay. Ralph mopped the sweat from his face with an already sodden handkerchief.

There was the shrieking of tires. Ralph looked around. Madman Sammy Schrunk's cab sailed serenely around the corner behind them.

The driver, whose name was Moe Spivvy according to the identification card in the

cab, shook his head. "I coulda tol' ya, Mac."

"Keep trying, please."

Ralph thought of *Young Love*, and shuddered. What was alive about her, of course, was subjective. And what was subjective about her was love. Ralph was the first man she had seen in her new state. She loved him. She was seven feet tall. And besides, Ralph already had (a) a wife and (b) a model who gave every sign of throwing herself at him. And . . .

Ralph gasped.

"You all right, Mac?" Moe Spivvy wanted to know.

"I—I just thought of something," Mitzi, he reflected. Even now, Mitzi was probably waiting for him at Manhattan Beach. He didn't know what she'd do if he failed to show up, but he knew she'd figure out something special—and especially bad.

"Hey, Mac," Moe Spivvy pointed out, "you never even said where we was going."

Ralph looked back. Madman Sammy Schrunk's cab hadn't gone away. *Young Love* was in it. Sighing, Ralph gave the Manhattan Beach address. Since Manhattan Beach was, and is, in Brooklyn, the drive was a long one.

All the way out there Ralph kept his eyes glued to the rear window.

Crossing the Manhattan Bridge, Ralph began to think they had lost Madman Sammy in the traffic. He allowed himself a grateful sigh. When they reached Prospect Park, still no Madman Sammy's cab behind them. Through the park, and beyond.

Madman Sammy Schrunk, apparently, wasn't anywhere.

"Here he comes now!" Mitzi cried.

One change had been wrought in the Manhattan Beach bungalow. The hole in the ceiling now contained a brand new, tinted glass skylight. Maybe a sculptor wouldn't like the tinted effect, Mitzi thought, but it sure was nice to look at.

Ovid Nearing said, "I don't see . . ."

"The cab, silly! Hide somewhere. Anyplace. In the closet. If he sees you here . . ."

"What about those reporters?" little Ovid Nearing asked, making no move to hide.

"Yes, yes, we'll have to worry about the reporters later. It's why I called you, Ovid dear. I couldn't handle them alone and I didn't want them hornin' in. I've thought

it over and decided this is bigger, much bigger, than the twenty-five grand you were going to give me."

Ovid Nearing nodded, then scowled doubtfully. "But my dear, I'd like to point out—"

"Not now. No time. Get in the closet, quick."

And she shoved him.

"I've been trying to tell you that—"

A final shove, then both hands against the closet door, then a click as it closed and remained closed.

Just in time, for Mitzi heard footsteps coming briskly up the walk. She had time to light a cigarette and put a bored expression on her face, then Ralph came in.

"I thought you'd changed your mind," Mitzi said pouting.

"I—er—was delayed. Did you see the papers?"

"Yes. That's our friend Panning's work, probably. We couldn't get together on the split last night, Ralph. I'm sorry. I'm sure you know I had your best interests at heart." She gave him a coy smile. "We'll have to do something about Mr. Panning. If you want my advice, we'll have to cut him off with nothing at all."

Ralph didn't say yes, and didn't say no. He rushed to

the door, opened it, peered outside. He didn't see Madman Sammy Schrunk's cab.

"Somebody following you?"

Ralph couldn't think. His mind was in a turmoil, and he told himself, his brain whirling, he'd better do some sculpting. Sculpting, of course, was his hobby. It calmed him. If he picked up mallet and chisel now, and attacked Mitzi's life study, after a little while he might be able to figure out what to do. Maybe . . .

Mitzi was wearing a well-fitted halter and a different pair of Bermudas today. Ralph said, "Er, Mitzi, if you'll—"

She understood at once, Eschewing the screen, dropping the two whisks of garments en route to the platform, she took her striding position about thirty seconds after the idea had occurred to Ralph.

"The smile," he said.

The Mona Lisa smile tugged at her lovely lips.

"Ah, that's perfect! Hold it."

For the first time, and to his considerable surprise, Ralph found that he could be completely objective about her. She was a woman. A nude, beautiful woman—but she was also, and this, all at

once, loomed as far more important, the model for a statue he was attempting to carve. He didn't know why the change should have occurred, but then he remembered *Young Love*. Perhaps *Young Love* had something to do with it. He shuddered to think what might happen if she ever got him in her embrace. It was a little like the man dying of thirst, he thought a little wryly as he began to tap the handle of the chisel with the wood mallet, who, screaming for water, is suddenly deluged by a tidal wave and drowns. So it had been with Ralph. Eight years on the domestic leash—then, whamo! Mitzi, gorgeous and uninhibited, and *Young Love*, a glamazon who had only one all-consuming motivation, her love for Ralph. . . .

He worked in a frenzy, losing track of time, of place, of circumstance. There was also another answer to his sudden objectivity, but so far it had only nibbled at his consciousness. He paused in his work for a moment, to look at his hands. They were ordinary-looking hands, sure. But what they could do! They could take a hunk of formless marble, work it over, chisel off a flake here, create an

angle there, polish, smooth, until the formless hunk of marble took on shape, personality, identity.

And more than that. They could touch the statue, his statue or any statue, and bring it to life. Ralph studied his hands, fascinated. It was the greatest gift since Prometheus brought fire to man, but Ralph remembered some of Panning's ideas yesterday, and wasn't so happy with himself. The Pannings in this world were legion. For every individual who'd want to use such a power for the good of mankind, there'd be ten who, like Panning, thought only in terms of profit and exploitation. Ralph went on looking at his hands. He didn't know if he wanted the strange power or not.

Mitzi's voice broke through his reverie. "It's amazing, how fast you're working. And—and it looks so real!"

Ralph paused for breath. Even he was amazed. He'd hardly been aware of sculpting, yet Mitzi's likeness in the pink Tennessee marble was complete, except for final polishing, down to the navel. Ralph stood back, surveying his work. He was even more amazed. It was easily the best thing he'd ever done. Ralph was a pretty good critic and

had always been able to judge his own work with considerable objectivity.

This half-completed statue of Mitzi Hunter was a genuine work of art.

But why? thought Ralph. Until today his was only second-rate amateur statuary. But now, if this statue of Mitzi meant anything, his work would stand high in the first rank of contemporary sculptors.

He didn't get it at first. Then he spread the fingers of his right hand wide and looked at them. Why not? he thought. What is the artistic attempt, but an attempt at recreation of life, always doomed to failure but always striving for at least symbolic success? So, if he had the power to touch stone into flesh, it stood to reason that the same hands that could perform that feat would also be able to do an artist's life-recreation job very well indeed. Whatever else happened, Ralph had a hunch, at least this would remain.

Unconsciously, he had gone closer to the unfinished Mitzi-statue. Eyes rapt, he surveyed it. Every line, every curve, was perfect. Even Mitzi, who had gone behind the screen with her clothing now, sens-

ing that he had done as much as he could for today, must have realized that.

The statue seemed so utterly real. But it was only cold Tennessee marble, of course, pink glowing, but quite cold and quite dead. Ralph hadn't touched it to life yet, and wouldn't. Matilda-Jane, Sonny, and *Young Love*, he had already decided, were quite enough.

The curves, he thought, so exquisitely perfect. Surely it wouldn't be hard cold stone to the touch. Surely . . .

His hand reached out.

And he touched the statue's breast.

Cold dead marble.

And a tingling.

"It's on fire!" Mitzi screamed.

But it wasn't on fire. Shocked, Ralph stepped back. The pink marble of the Mitzi-statue seemed to glow from the navel up. Ralph hadn't worked on any more of the statue than that. Ralph let his chisel fall from nerveless fingers.

The Mitzi-statue stretched, smiled languidly, stroked the perfection of flesh—yes, flesh!—which was her body, purred like a cat, then saw Ralph and really smiled at him. She made a motion as if to come forward, but of

course, there wasn't any of her from the navel down. Just a block of marble.

The smile on her lips turned to a pout. "You made me," she said, "and I was going to reward you for it. But you can't leave me like this. You can't! You've got to finish me. You wouldn't be cruel enough to leave me half flesh, half stone . . ."

"Good God," the real Mitzi said in a subdued voice as she came out from behind the screen. "She—she's me. And she's alive."

Just then the closet door burst open. It was more than Ovid Nearing, who wanted nothing more out of life than a real live statue of Mitzi Hunter, could stand.

"At last!" he cried. "At last, you've done it—" His voice trailed off. He saw the block of marble, the half-finished job.

"But surely you're going to . . ."

"Somebody's at the door," Mitzi said, cutting him off.

There was, indeed, a pounding at the door.

Ralph went over there warily. "Who is it?" he demanded.

"*Young Love*!" a girlish voice answered triumphantly. "I've found you at last."

And she pounded on the door again. Ralph wouldn't open it. It was a solid oak door and her pounding was of no avail. After a while she went away. Or so Ralph thought.

"Now then," Ovid Nearing was saying as Ralph got back to the unfinished statue, "you've got to hurry. You see, I know more about this power you have than you do. It was I who—shall we say—suggested it to you? I'm responsible for it."

"Suggested it?"

"Through hypnosis, yes. But of course it would have failed utterly if you hadn't had the germ of great art latent within you. What I've been trying to say, though, is this: you'll have to hurry, for although you've tapped the cosmic rays, as indeed, every matrix of energy which would become matter in the universe must do, although you've tapped them, it was a combination of my hypnotic suggestion and your own artistic talents, and it can only be temporary."

"You mean," gasped Ralph, "I won't have the power forever?"

"Certainly not. So please. Please hurry. Finish the statue for me. I'll double my fee. Half for you, half for the

model. Twenty thousand dollars, Mr. Harper."

"But what will happen to me . . . my . . ."

"As for you, that is simple. You will be left with your latent artistic talent fully realized. In that way, at least, you will always be able to utilize the lifetons. As for the statues, however," Ovid Nearing added doubtfully, "that is quite another matter. Quite, Mr. Harper. There are two possibilities. The first is certain, the second is problematical. About the first I can do nothing. About the second, I'm quite willing to risk my forty thousand dollars. But get ahead with it. Please get on with it!"

Ralph shook his head. "No. First you're going to tell me."

In an agitation of haste, Nearing spoke so quickly that Ralph could hardly hear the words. Besides, something else was occupying Ralph's attention. He thought he heard a suspicious noise on the roof. Nearing said:

"The first is definite. You'll lose your power. You'll never turn another statue of stone into a life of flesh after the power leaves you. The second—I don't know. The second relates to the statues you have already made. They may go

right on living. They may revert to their original lifeless form. I do not know." He gazed raptly at the half-complete, and living, statue of Mitzi Hunter. "I simply do not know. But you can see why you've got to hurry. As nearly as I can judge, your power should be almost exhausted."

"Think," agreed the Mitzi statue earnestly, "how I feel."

The scraping, scratching noise on the roof disappeared for a moment. Ralph looked up at the ceiling, at the newly-installed, tinted glass skylight.

There was an explosive sound—and the skylight suddenly burst down at them.

Through the shards of flying glass and metal struts raining down, diving head-first into the room with her cloak up in front of her face to protect her from broken glass, came *Young Love*.

She alighted on all fours and stood up lithely, the cloak swirling about her. She towered over everyone in the room. She strode like a lioness toward Ralph. "At last," she said in her childish voice, "all my life I've wanted to . . . now you're here and I'm . . ." her voice trailed off, and returned on an ominous

note. "Just who *are* all these people?"

"Listen," Ralph said hastily, "I didn't make you. I had nothing to do with that. All I did was bring you to life and I couldn't have unless the sculptor, Jeremiah Beam, had done a terrific job. So it isn't me you want at all," he added hopefully. "It isn't me. You're not crazy about me. You just made a mistake. You're really crazy about Jeremiah Beam. He's the one you want."

Young Love advanced inexorably over the glass shards. "I never heard of any Jeremiah Beam, Ralph darling," she said. She was very close to him. In another moment, she would take him in her bone-crushing embrace. Ralph could practically feel his ribs creaking already. Of course, *Young Love* wouldn't mean any harm by it, but she just didn't know her own strength.

Ralph backed against the pedestal of the Mitzi-statue. The statue shouted something, but he didn't hear what it was. He had nowhere else to retreat. *Young Love* possessed an enormous reach, and used it to block his way.

Then something came into view behind *Young Love's* shoulder. It was Ovid Nearing's small, middle-aged face

and it looked frightened. But it also looked determined.

Ovid Nearing, a small man, raised himself on his tiptoes. He had to, in order to reach the top of *Young Love's* head with Ralph's mallet. He did so.

There was a *thunking* sound. The mallet bounced off *Young Love's* head and out of Ovid Nearing's hand.

Young Love collapsed like a felled redwood tree.

Nearing circumambulated the body. *Young Love* was breathing. When she came to she'd probably have nothing more serious than a lump and a painful headache. But, naturally, she'd be furious. He couldn't blame her.

"I had to do it," Ovid Nearing said. "There's no time to lose. The statue. You must finish the statue."

Mechanically, Ralph picked up chisel and mallet. *Clink-clink-clink*. He struck three times.

"It's ticklish!" the Mitzi-stature said, giggling. It sounded just like Mitzi's own giggle.

Clink - clink - clink. Three more blows.

And someone knocked at the door.

Ralph threw his hands up. "Let them in," he said. "Let them *all* in!"

But when no one went to the door, Ralph went himself.

"Who's there?" he said in a tired voice.

The voice which answered was muffled and indistinct. "Let me in. It's important."

Ralph shrugged fatalistically. *Young Love* had already arrived and—at least for the nonce—had been dealt with. The worst that could happen, had happened. Or so he thought.

Ralph opened the door. And the reporter Panning stalked into the bungalow behind the barrel of a .45 automatic.

Pete the photographer was with him, but Pete looked unhappy. He sat down on the edge of the model's platform and didn't say a word. He didn't enter into what followed, either.

Panning said, "All right, Harper. You had your chance. I wanted to share fifty-fifty with you. I thought that was fair. I was even willing to go down a little if I had to, but you just weren't buying, were you?"

Ralph didn't say anything. He was standing about two feet from Panning. The .45 looked like a sixteen inch naval gun.

"So now," Panning said,

waving the gun, "I'm going to take the works. All of it."

Ralph was surprised. He didn't have the slightest idea what Panning had in mind, nor did he know how Panning could do it, whatever it was he *did* have in mind. Then he happened to look down at the floor. Matilda-Jane and Sonny were standing there. Evidently they had come in with Panning. They ranged themselves alongside his ankles.

Matilda-Jane said hostilely, "We've had all we want of you, Mr. Ralph Harper."

"Mr. Panning feeds us and everything," Sonny said in an arrogant ten-year-old's voice.

"He recognized our importance right away," Matilda-Jane sniffed. "We're on his side."

Panning looked around the room. When he saw *Young Love* stretched out on the floor he whistled. "All that girl couldn't be for real," he said. "You make it?"

"I brought it to life," Ralph said.

"Then she comes. Hey, Pete! Cart her outside to the truck."

"Do you mind," Ralph asked coldly, "telling me what your plan is?"

"That's a cinch," Panning said. "Take the two pint-sized folks." Matilda-Jane

HIS TOUCH TURNED STONE TO FLESH

and Sonny, far from minding the appellation, beamed up at him. "Take the big broad. And—" he glanced at the incomplete, partially alive Mitzi-stature—"have you finish that one up and take it too. Find ourselves a scientist who can examine them and learn what makes them tick. And—start producing. What could be simpler?"

Ralph wanted to grin, knowing it would never work. The combination of the life-force, as Ovid Nearing had explained, and of Ralph's own very special talent, was necessary. But Ralph sensed that it wasn't what Panning could or couldn't do so much as what he *wanted* to do. Somehow, the presence—and plans—of a man like Panning rubbed off on everyone present. Ralph felt dirty just being near him.

"Well?" Panning said ominously. "You gonna do it?"

"Do what?"
"Finish that statue you're working on. Come on, we don't have all day."

Ralph knew that he'd worked today as one possessed. Probably, he could finish the Mitzi-stature in a couple of hours rather than the days or even weeks one would expect.

But he wasn't going to tell Panning that. He wouldn't do a thing to help Panning. In fact, since all this had started with his own special talent, if somehow he didn't foil Panning, even at danger to himself, he'd never be able to look himself in the eye again.

"It would take weeks!" he protested.

Panning looked at him, then at Ovid Nearing. Nearing meant no harm. He had a one track mind, though. He wanted to see the statue of Mitzi completed. He said, "The way Mr. Harper has been working, he could finish it in two or three hours."

Panning leered at Ralph. Stubbornly, Ralph shook his head.

"Oh, you might as well go ahead and do it, Ralph," Mitzi said.

In spite of himself, Ralph smiled. Panning wanted the statues for his own selfish ends. Pete didn't seem to be actively helping him, but wasn't hindering him either. Mitzi saw nothing immoral about it, and obviously wanted the money Ovid Nearing had promised her. Nearing only wanted one thing, selfishly—the statue, completed. Little Matilda and Sonny, two tiny walking inferiority complexes, thanks to their size,

wanted to feel important, hence would play along with Panning. And all Panning wished to do was learn the secret of creation—which he couldn't do, but that was besides the point—and, learning it, create life, for enslavement.

Ralph smiled grimly. *I guess*, he thought, *that leaves me*. He didn't feel particularly saintly, but he did feel annoyed—annoyed that so many people could so easily and apparently without remorse put their own interests ahead of all that should have been humane, unselfish, and dominant within them.

"Get to work," Panning insisted.

His eyes roved, held for a moment on the mallet on the floor.

Ralph hit him.

They tumbled back together. The .45 went off, burning a path through air inches from Ralph's cheek. The roar of the automatic deafened him, and he fought in a frightening world of utter silence. At any moment he half-expected one of the others to come to Panning's aid.

Panning hit him, and Ralph felt a numbness spread from his stomach. He began to sag,

but saw a double-image of Panning, the .45 raised, a smug smile on his face, about to bring the weapon down on his head and end the fight. Ralph clawed up, his fingers closing on Panning's wrist.

With his free hand, Panning jabbed at Ralph's face, snapping his neck back. Ralph, with a roaring in his ears and still barely able to breathe, went crashing back against the Mitzi-statue's pedestal. He thought he heard the Mitzi-statue scream. He bounced off, came at Panning with fists flailing.

Panning dropped him with a right cross that almost shook Ralph loose from the world. But in doing so, Panning had to switch the automatic from his right hand to his left. He dropped it. Ralph, already on the floor, scrambled after it.

Panning kicked it out of reach.

Ralph scrambled to his feet. They circled warily, jabbing at air. Ralph's breath was roaring in his throat. He thought of all the evil in the world, most of it stemming directly from human selfishness, and all at once for him Panning seemed to be the personification of it.

Ralph—who was told later that he bellowed like an an-

gry bull—put his head down and charged.

His first wild rush bore Panning back and off his feet. They went over in a mad scramble of arms and legs, then Ralph felt the good, clean pain shooting up through his right arm as his fist pounded Panning's face. His hand would swell like a balloon, he told himself cheerfully. Well, let it. It would be like a medal . . .

They had to drag him off Panning. He got to his feet, gasping for breath. He could hear now, but there was still a roaring in his ears. Pete, on his knees, was administering to the beaten Panning. Mitzi was hugging Ralph and telling him what a great big strong man he was.

Then the door opened.

The first one in was a policeman, evidently attracted by the gunfire. He looked at the Mitzi-statue and almost lost his cap. He stared down at *Young Love*, who was just regaining consciousness, and did. He asked questions, and everybody tried to answer him at once.

He was the first one through the door, but he wasn't the only one. Director Onager and his cohorts, who had followed *Young Love*,

were next. At first Ralph didn't know why they had waited outside all this time. Then he knew. They had reinforcements in the person of the biggest man Ralph had ever seen in his life—a huge fat man almost as tall as *Young Love* and twice as heavy. He had wild red hair and a wilder beard halfway down to his waist.

He boomed: "My statue! Where's my statue?"

He stalked into the room. The floor shook. He gazed around with tiny, close-set eyes. He looked like the Terrytoon version of the giant in Jack and the Beanstalk. He was Jeremiah Beam of the Bronx, and he had carved *Young Love*. He spotted her on the floor. She was just getting up.

Apparently Onager had told him what had happened. Jeremiah Beam moaned. It was a noise like a railroad whistle. "You did this!" he accused the still-dazed Ralph. "You ruined my non-objective masterpiece. Look at her! Look at her! Real flesh and blood. I'm ruined! Ruined!"

His right fist traveled about four inches and deposited Ralph on the floor.

His head was cradled in

Mitzi's lap. He did not know how it got there. He was comfortable and didn't try to move it. He opened his eyes. He blinked. *Young Love* was getting up.

And changing.

The soft flesh and the round curves glowed, altered—became hard stone and stiff angles. Ralph blinked again. He was staring at the original *Young Love*—an oversized abstract hatrack wearing a man's black leather glove. Jeremiah Beam, tears in his eyes, went over and embraced it.

On the floor near Ralph stood Matilda-Jane and Sonny. They were statues again. The Sonny-statue was stuffing a cracker crumb into its mouth. It was now, miraculously, a first-rate work of art.

His eyes went higher. He saw the Mitzi-statue, reaching out in supplication yet managing to look seductive at the same time—and, of course, frozen forever that way in cold marble.

He sighed, and heard Ovid Nearing say:

"I told you this might happen. He has lost the power of the lifetons—to a degree. He cannot create life now from stone. The statues have reverted—" here Ovid Nearing

shed a tear for what might have been—"to their original form. From now on the lifetons will merge with his own creative talent. What he carves from stone will be dead by biological standards—but will live forever like the Venus of Milo!"

It should have been enough, but of course it wasn't. For one more person still had to come through that much-used door. She did. Ralph never knew how she had found out where to reach him. He never gained the courage to ask her.

It was his wife, Beverly.

Ralph suddenly became aware that his head was still cushioned on Mitzi's shorts-clad lap. Beverly said something. Mitzi said something. Beverly said something angrily. Mitzi got up in a huff. Ralph's head went *bang* against the hard floor. No one helped him up, not even Beverly. He climbed to his feet. Beverly looked wrathful, but beautiful in her own way. Not in the stereotyped mode of beauty that was copied to such perfection by Mitzi, but in her own inimitable way, in the way of the wife that Ralph loved.

He went over to her. She gave him an angry look. Everyone else was arguing. The cop was taking notes furiously. Panning, looking thoroughly beaten with two black eyes and a swollen jaw, was just regaining consciousness.

"Can we slip out?" Beverly whispered.

Ralph nodded. He took her arm and they went outside into the sunshine.

There was no check from Onager waiting for him at home, and now there wouldn't be one. And maybe his sculpting wouldn't scale the heights that Ovid Nearing had predicted, but it would be art from now on, so Ralph could give up his engineering and make his living from his statues as, secretly, he had always wanted to do. And as for the oat of his eight years of domesticity, he had sown it. Indeed he had.

He looked at Beverly lovingly. She pretended anger. Then she stopped pretending, and, as it turned out, Ralph and Beverly were still more than able to share some wild oats between them.

THE END

Mr. Milford's Magic Camera

By FORREST NORTON

Mr. Milford photographed a model in an expensive evening gown. But when he developed the print, he found a completely nude girl. The camera had undressed her! Milford was instantly alive to the possibilities of his new-found power. Would he be strong enough to resist temptation?

MR. MILFORD was in the dark. Literally. Mr. Milford was a professional photographer and he was doing what would ordinarily be a very routine job—developing a batch of negatives. For the first time in twenty-five years, however, this usual chore was filled with delightful anticipation.

His slender hands trembled slightly in the dark as he carefully slid each film from its holder and gently placed it in a developing hanger. He thought back to the sitting that he had made last night. He remembered the exact time yesterday that this delicious looking blonde had walked into the studio and asked if he could do a drape photograph of her that evening.

For all his years in the business, Mr. Milford had done very little glamour photography; most of his work was with children. He hated them. Not publicly, of course, but in his private thoughts he hated them. When he thought of the thousands of little brats he had cajoled into sitting still while he snapped the shutter, he shivered. Thousands of them, all alike; and thousands of accompanying mothers. They were all alike, too, each thinking her badly-behaved little beast was something unique. Each pleading sweetly with little Jimmy or Mary to "sit up straight and smile at the birdie."

Mr. Milford shuddered. What the little apes really needed was a good swift boot



George gulped. Something was wrong! Or was wrong the right word?

in the britches. Instead, he smiled at the mothers, smiled at the children, squeezed the bulb instead of their little necks and kept on eating off of a dull job.

But last night! *That* had been different. A little tremor of excitement shook Mr. Milford's thin frame as he remembered last night. Oh, there'd been nothing wrong—at least not in actuality. Mr. Milford blushed in the dark as he recalled the esoteric thoughts that had flooded his mind when the girl had come out of the dressing room. The soft folds of the draping cloth revealed no more than a white shoulder, but Mr. Milford had a splendid imagination.

They had gone into the lighted camera room and Mr. Milford had arranged the shimmering material to half cover, half reveal. His hands had trembled so in this pleasurable, but unaccustomed, task that the girl had looked at him queerly. He had essayed a couple of mild jokes to ease his tension.

For nearly an hour he had posed and shot her in every pose he could remember seeing in the magazines. He finished reluctantly. When she had re-dressed herself, he

ushered her from the studio, promising to have the proofs for her tomorrow. A dazzling smile had been his reward.

He had wanted to stay and develop them that night, but he knew it would be too hard to explain working that late. Leora, his slightly out-size wife, always seemed able to see right through him. When they were first married, she had been a cute little thing, hardly larger than the blonde he had photographed. Small as he was, he had felt quite masculine beside her. He sighed as he thought what fifteen years had accomplished.

He placed the last film in the rack and lifted it gently over to the developing tank. It was heavier than usual. He'd shot much more film than ordinarily. His mouth curved in a little smile as he remembered how much.

He slid the loaded rack into the developer with the deftness of long practice. His mind on last night, he switched on the light. An oath that was more of a groan escaped him. He'd forgotten to put the cover on the tank!

Frantically, he yanked the light out and stood in the darkness, trembling. Unfamiliar words rolled from his

lips as he cursed himself for a blundering fool. The film would be ruined. He fumbled for the tank cover, put it in place, turned on the light again and reached instinctively for the timer.

"What for?" he asked himself, aloud. Two big tears of frustration slid over his cheek. He dashed his hand angrily across his face. No sense crying. He'd just have to explain to the sitter that a bad batch of film had spoiled the job. He smiled wryly as he thought how that handy excuse had served many a photographer over the years.

At least, he'd have the fun of doing the job over again. He brightened at this pleasing thought. One day's delay in finishing the pictures shouldn't make too much difference. At least he hoped it wouldn't.

He reached toward the tank; might as well dump these films. Experience assured him that they were ruined. As his hands touched the cover, he hesitated. Maybe, just *maybe*, some of the shots would be all right. It was a forlorn hope, but, he decided, he might just as well let them go the full time. He turned out the light again.

A sudden thought struck

him, as he agitated the films in the tank. Maybe some of the films would be . . . what was the word? He searched his memory. *Solarized!* that was it. He'd read articles about it. You exposed partially developed film to white light and a reversal took place on parts of the negatives. It made very unusual prints. Might even give him something for the art show or for one of the professional salons.

His spirits lifting slightly, he turned on the light and glanced at the timer. Two minutes to go, he thought impatiently. He snapped the light off and agitated the rack vigorously as if to speed the passage of time.

BRRINNGG! went the timer, finally. He lifted the rack out and dropped the films into the fixer. Counting off sixty seconds of final darkness, he snapped the light on and lifted one of the films from the tank. It wouldn't have cleared yet, he knew, but he could get some idea of what he might have. He held it up to the light.

He looked, blinked his eyes rapidly, then looked again. With shaking hands and beating heart he carefully placed the film in the tank

again, staggered to a stool in the corner and collapsed on it. His head whirled, dizzily.

"It can't be," he muttered. "I'd better see a doctor."

He fumbled for a handkerchief, removed his glasses and polished them carefully. Then he stood up uncertainly and approached the tank as though it were a time bomb.

He took the same negative out again. It had cleared now and was probably the most perfect one that Mr. Milford had ever seen. He replaced it, looked at the others, his heart thumping. All the same . . . all perfect. Perfect wasn't the word for them!

There was the lovely blonde, looking even more beautiful than he remembered. But something had happened to the negative . . . and no amount of eye blinking could change that fact.

There was the blonde, all right, but where was the drape? And where were the other clothes she had been wearing? Mr. Milford's startled eyes were looking at a set of negatives of the finest nudes he had ever seen!

"Wow!" The exclamation burst from him. Then, always the careful technician, he put the films to wash. This done, he put a sign "Out to Lunch"

in the window, locked the door and went back and sat down. This was going to require some thought.

What could have happened, he wondered. This wasn't solarization . . . certainly not the way the articles described it. This was something fantastic . . . something wonderful. The possibilities of the process began to dawn on Mr. Milford.

I'll be rich! he thought. I'll make a million dollars. I can photograph anybody and Zipp! out comes a nude. He trembled with excitement. There was no limit to what he could do with the process.

His mind raced ahead. Best thing to do would be to connect up with some art agency . . . this thing was too big for him to handle alone. A tinge of regret at splitting the profits was tempered by the thought that an established agency could make more money for both of them than he could by himself.

He floated in a delirious dream for several minutes, then bumped back to reality with a thud. What if he couldn't do it again? What if it was a fluke? He groaned out loud, the excitement replaced by sudden dread. He sat slumped for a minute,

then jumped up. There was only one way to find out.

He loaded a holder with fumbling hands, went into the camera room and turned on the lights. The camera focused on the posing bench, he slipped the film in, went over and sat down with the bulb in his hand.

He suddenly felt embarrassed, sitting there, realizing what he was trying to do. Mr. Milford was a sensitive soul where nudity was concerned. His own nudity, that is. He hated undressing in public. The way some of the guys at the golf club paraded around the locker room on their way to the showers always made him avert his eyes. He always wrapped a towel around his thin frame.

Even at home he never appeared before his wife in anything other than full dress. She, he regretted, was not so fastidious. So what he was about to do brought a faint blush to his cheeks.

"Hell," he said out loud, "it's only an experiment. And I can burn the film right away." He forced himself to look at the accusing camera eye and squeezed the bulb.

He breathed a sigh of relief when it was done, dashed to the darkroom and plopped

the film into the developer. Trying to remember how he had done it before, he counted ten slowly, snapped the light on, counted ten seconds again and yanked the light out. He covered the tank and set the timer.

The next five minutes were the longest Mr. Milford had ever spent. He alternated between high hope and black despair . . . between a feverish flush and shaking chills. The lump in his throat grew.

When the buzzer finally went off, he jerked the light out, snatched the film from the tank and plunged it into the fixer. Sixty seconds later he turned on the light and fearfully lifted the dripping film and looked at it. A low moan of anguish broke from his lips.

There he was, fully clothed and looking somewhat sheepish. He slammed the hanger to the floor and sank down on the stool in the corner, his dreams turning to dust in his dry mouth. He wanted to cry.

Some time later he was dragged back to reality by the sound of pounding on the front door. He tried to disregard it, but finally forced himself to his feet and went out to see who it was. Through the glass he could

see the furious face of his wife.

Oh, damn it, he thought. Why did she have to come here right now? What'll I tell her? As he unlocked the door, he searched his mind for a good excuse.

"Hello, Leora," he said, brightly.

She stalked past him heavily, then whirled and snapped, "What's the idea of closing up in the middle of the morning? Are we so rich that you don't have to work? Out to lunch, indeed. Are you trying to drive customers away? Well, answer me!"

"Bu . . . but I *was* working, dear," he stammered.

She sniffed, nastily.

A sudden inspiration flashed through Mr. Milford's mind. What if there was nothing wrong with his new-found process. Nothing, that is, excepting the sitter. What if it wouldn't work unless . . . he blushed slightly . . . unless he stood back of the camera looking at the sitter and thought . . . well, thought THOUGHTS.

"What are you blushing about?" his wife demanded, suspiciously. "Henry, do you have someone in here you don't want me to see?"

Mr. Milford was aghast

at the accusation and its implications.

"Why, Leora, how can you say such a thing! I was just . . . just . . ." he fumbled for a logical explanation. Another inspiration hit him. "I was just trying out some new lighting," he finished, triumphantly. "On myself," he added, hastily, as his wife moved towards the camera room.

She snorted, and stuck her head through the curtains.

The back view tempted Mr. Milford's toe, but he restrained himself. He had a better idea.

"I was trying a new type of lighting one of the boys demonstrated at the meeting the other night," he said smoothly. "But it's hard to arrange the lights when I'm the sitter. I locked the door because I didn't want anyone barging in on me. I'd feel sort of silly if they caught me taking my own picture." This last, at least, was true.

"You'd look silly, too," his wife assured him, nastily, but the suspicion faded from her eyes.

"I'll tell you what, Leora. Slip off your coat, and let me try a couple of shots of you."

"Why Henry," she said, coyly, "you haven't taken my picture in years. But I can't

do it now. I promised mother I'd meet her at eleven and it's almost that now."

"Please, Leora," he begged. "It'll only take a couple of minutes."

"But my hair's a mess, and my make-up . . ." she protested, weakly.

"It'll only take a minute to fix your hair," he said, eagerly. "And your make-up is perfect. This process is different. The lighting takes care of a lot of things." It sure does, he thought, grinning.

Persuaded, she vanished into the dressing room to fuss with her hair while Henry went to load some holders. He returned quickly. "I'm ready, my dear," he called, gaily.

His wife came in, smiling archly. Mr. Milford shuddered. This wasn't going to be easy.

"Sit right here," he told her.

"But Henry, these lights don't look any different than the ones you always use!"

Mr. Milford cursed his carelessness and explained, lamely. "It's only partly in the lighting, dear. Most of it is in the developing process."

"Are you sure I look all

right?" his wife asked, anxiously.

"You never looked better," he assured her, with a smothered giggle. "Now turn just a little bit this way, tilt your head to the left . . . perfect. Hold it just like that."

Mr. Milford stood with the bulb in his hand, stared at his wife, and tried to think the kind of thoughts the blonde had inspired last night. A little groan escaped him. It wasn't going to work.

"Is something wrong, dear?" his wife asked.

"No, no," he said, hastily. He tried closing his eyes. That was a little better. A hazy image of his wife flitted through his mind. A vagrant thought of the blonde titillated him, but he suppressed it sternly. If his theory was right, he had to keep his mind on the sitter. He grunted a little with the mental effort, got a hazy image of his wife back again, and snapped the shutter.

He made four shots, then, so that he'd have something to show his wife, thought of her dressed and made several more shots.

"That should do it," he said. "And thanks for helping me."

"I hope they're good," she simpered. "I know mother

would like to have one." She slipped into her coat, smiled coyly, and left.

Mr. Milford watched through the window until she turned the corner, then locked the door and dashed to the darkroom. Ten minutes later he was looking at the negatives of his wife. He laughed out loud and did an awkward little dance.

"It works!" he shouted, gleefully. True, he didn't have any pictures of a nude, but he *did* have exactly what he had seen in his mind's eye . . . a slightly hazy picture of his wife, partially undressed. Obviously, it all depended on the subject.

It was almost lunchtime, but Mr. Milford was too excited to think about food. He sat on the stool in the darkroom and tried to make plans. He'd need help in promoting his process. But who could he trust? Someone who could handle this thing and provide him with the proper models.

He moistened his suddenly dry lips. What a future! No more babies, no more children, no more simpering brides. By all means, no more brides! He chuckled as he thought what would happen if he tried to do *them*. Maybe, just for the hell of it, he *would* do a few. He

could always tell them that something had spoiled the film. He might even control his imagination long enough to get a few usable shots.

But who could he get to handle the stuff for him? This wasn't just a hobby . . . this was mint. He thought of Fort Knox and sneered.

A name popped into his mind. Alan Morse. That's my boy, he thought. He didn't like Morse, nor the over-expansive type he represented. But he was certainly the guy who could put this thing over and cash in on all the possibilities.

Alan was head of Morse and Associates, a big commercial studio. They handled a lot of advertising work and were used to working with models. Lots of beautiful models. Henry rubbed his hands gleefully.

Better get going, he thought. He checked the negatives of the blonde. They were dry. He picked out a couple of the best ones and made careful prints. He gave them a quick wash, then slid them lovingly into the drier.

While they were drying, he phoned Miss Martin, the blonde of the night before, to tell her that something had gone wrong with the sit-

ting. It was with mixed feelings that he heard her say she was going out of town and would be unable to come in again. He knew he'd never be able to photograph her and keep her clothes on. He mumbled an apology and hung up. It would have been fun, he thought, regretfully. Maybe later . . .

Then he looked up Morse's number and dialed it.

"Alan Morse and Associates," a cultured voice informed him.

"Let me speak to Mr. Morse," he said.

"Whom shall I say is calling?"

"Mr. Milford."

Silence for a minute, then, "I'm sorry, Mr. Milford. Mr. Morse is just leaving for lunch. May I have him call you back later?"

A sense of his new power surged through Henry.

"Tell Morse to wait right there," he snapped. "I'll be in his office in fifteen minutes and I expect him to be there. He can eat later." He banged the phone down and sat there breathing heavily. Lunch, indeed! If he was willing to go without lunch, Morse could too. It wouldn't hurt Alan to miss a meal. He was too fat anyway.

He took the prints out of
MR. MILFORD'S MAGIC CAMERA

the drier, slid them into an envelope, and left the studio clutching them to his skinny chest. A passing cab caught his eye, and he signalled the driver. It screeched to the curb, he climbed in, gave Morse's address and leaned back happily.

The receptionist in the office of Morse and Associates looked at him apprehensively when he announced his name.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Milford." She glanced over her shoulder and lowered her voice. "Mr. Morse was very much up . . ." A door down the hall burst open and Morse erupted.

"What the hell do you mean, Milford, ordering me to wait here for you?" He glared at Henry. "I've got half a notion to . . . to . . ." he spluttered to a stop as Henry walked towards him, jauntily.

"Thanks for waiting, Morse," he threw over his shoulder as he brushed past into the luxurious office. He pulled a comfortable chair up to the desk, sat down and smiled up at Morse. "Sit down," he said.

Morse subsided into his chair and looked at Henry in bewilderment.

"What's come over you,

Milford? You don't act like the same man. Are you drunk?" he asked, suspiciously.

Henry nodded. "Could be." He held up his hand as Morse started to rise. "But not with alcohol. With an idea."

Morse was no fool. People like Henry didn't suddenly change, unless some strong idea had taken hold of them. And Morse had built a fortune by taking other men's ideas, polishing them up a bit, and cashing in on them. He had rejected hundreds of crack-pot schemes, but he always listened. A few had turned out to be highly profitable . . . to him, at least. He leaned across the desk, looked keenly at Henry.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Look at these." Henry slid the envelope over to him.

Morse slipped the prints out and looked at them.

"Why, Henry!" he said, archly. "This is not like you."

Henry flushed, but said nothing.

"But," continued Morse, with a leer, "interesting as they are, I don't see where it concerns us. Unless," he added, "you want us to use this model." He thumbed

through the pictures again. "Very interesting, I must admit. We could probably give her some work occasionally. Now, if that's all," he stood up, looking annoyed, "I wish you had brought these in at a more convenient time. Just leave the girl's name with the receptionist." He glanced meaningly at his watch.

Henry smiled, pityingly. "Sit down," he commanded.

Morse sat.

"That isn't all. You don't think I'm running around peddling pictures of nudes, do you? The important thing is that that girl was fully dressed when I took her picture."

Morse did a double take, then looked at Henry in alarm.

"Of course she was, old boy," he said, soothingly. He estimated the distance to the door in case Henry got violent. He could just make it, he decided. He inched his chair towards the corner of the desk and started to rise. "Now, you wait right here, and I'll get my secretary to make out a file card on this girl."

"Sit down!" Henry snapped.

Morse did, smiling a somewhat sickly smile.

"When I said that girl had

her clothes on, I meant exactly that. When I photographed her last night she was fully dressed. Oh, she had a drape on instead of a blouse, but, outside of that, she was wearing all of her clothes. When I developed the negatives this morning, they came out like that." He gestured towards the photographs.

"You're nuts," Morse said bluntly, forgetting diplomacy.

Henry shook his head. "I thought I was too. So I repeated the experiment on my wife. They weren't as good as these," he admitted, "but they proved I could do it. I'm positive I can do it on anybody."

"You mean," Morse demanded, "that you could take a picture of me, and I'd come out . . ."

Henry made a rude noise. A mental picture of Alan parading around naked assailed him and he shuddered. "Hell, no. That is, I probably could, but I'm damned if I would. It would make me ill."

Morse ignored this. "But you could take a picture of any girl and make it come out like this?"

Henry nodded.

"How do you do it?" Morse asked, eagerly.

Henry smiled a very superior smile. "If you think I'm going to tell you how I do it, you're nuts."

"Could you do it here?"

"Sure," Henry said, positively.

Morse jumped up. "Come on. I'll get the receptionist!"

"How about your lunch?"

Henry asked, slyly.

"To hell with my lunch! I want to see if you can really do this."

He bounded out of the door, yelled "Miss Jennings, come into the camera room, please," and dashed down the hall.

Henry followed more sedately, allowing the attractive Miss Jennings to precede him. His eyes followed her retreating figure speculatively. This was going to be fun.

In the camera room, he explained to her that he was going to demonstrate a new type of lighting to Mr. Morse. He arranged her carefully on the bench and fussed with the lights.

"Hurry up," Morse said, impatiently.

Henry ignored him. He focused the camera, slipped a film holder in and pulled the slide. Then he stood, bulb in hand, looking intently at Miss Jennings. Morse hovered

over his shoulder, breathing heavily.

It was no use. The improper thoughts wouldn't come. He turned to Morse in annoyance. "You'll have to get out."

"But . . . but . . ." Morse spluttered.

"I can't do it with you hanging over my shoulder." For the benefit of Miss Jennings he added, "I've showed you how the lights are arranged. But I can't make the exposure properly with you breathing down my neck. You can see the negatives after they're developed. Now beat it!"

"But I want to watch!" Morse wailed. "And I want to see how you develop them!"

"Out!" Henry commanded.

When Morse had left, still grumbling, he made several shots in various poses. He enjoyed every minute of it. When he had finished, Miss Jennings showed him where the darkroom was.

He went in, carefully locked the door and developed the films in his newly discovered way. When they were in the fixer, he turned on the lights and took an eager look at them. Perfect! He rubbed his hands in gleeful satisfaction,

unlocked the door and invited the impatient Morse in.

"There!" he said, dramatically, pointing to the tank.

Morse grabbed a dripping hanger and held it up to the light. "Zowie!" He plunged it back and inspected the others. "I've always wondered how she'd . . . he caught himself.

"Satisfied?" Henry demanded.

Morse threw an enthusiastic arm around his thin shoulders.

"Boy oh boy! We've got it made. Henry, there's a million dollars in your process." He grew suddenly serious. "You're sure you can repeat this any time you want to?"

Henry hesitated. "It may depend on the model," he said slowly. "I won't say why, but it may not work on everyone."

"But on most of them," Morse insisted, anxiously.

Henry nodded. "I'm sure of it."

Morse beamed on him. "Oh, Brother! Are we going to have fun with this!" He suddenly became all business. "Come on into my office and we'll draw up a contract." He started from the room.

Henry followed, his mind whirling. What kind of a con-

tract should he sign? Maybe he ought to get a lawyer. Hell, he decided, he didn't need a lawyer. With his new-found feeling of power, he felt a match for anyone. Morse couldn't put anything over on him. He went into the office and sat down next to the desk.

Morse was already seated, scribbling furiously. He grunted a couple of times, read what he had written, made a couple of changes and handed the paper to Henry.

Henry glanced at it, sneered, tore the paper in half and dropped the pieces into the wastebasket.

"Hey!" Morse protested. "What's the idea?"

Henry looked at him, disdainfully. "If you think I'd sign anything like that, you're nuts. Give me a sheet of paper. I'll write the contract." He thought for a moment, wrote briefly then shoved the paper over to Morse. "Read it out loud."

Morse cleared his throat and read. "For the sum of One Thousand Dollars a week . . . WHAT!"

"Go on."

Morse's hand trembled slightly as he continued. ". . . one thousand dollars a week, I, Henry Milford, agree

to work for Alan Morse and Associates for a period of one year from this date. It is further agreed that I will work only one day per week."

Morse screamed. "One day a week! We can't get anything done in one day a week!"

"Shut up and finish it," Henry said.

Morse glared, but continued. "Said day to consist of not over eight hours. During this time I will make, develop and print such pictures as Alan Morse may direct." Morse groaned. "Eight hours! And this doesn't say anything about your process."

"If you think I'm going to say anything in there about what kind of pictures I'm going to take, you're off your rocker. That would look swell if it ever got out. Read the rest of it."

Morse gave him a look of grudging admiration. "You are right," he admitted. "I hadn't thought of that." He picked up the contract again. "It is further agreed that any profit resulting from my work will be divided equally between myself and Morse and Associates."

Morse slammed the paper on the desk. "I won't sign it!" he said.

Henry shrugged and stood

up. "That's up to you. If you won't somebody else will. Somebody a damn sight smarter than you." He reached for the contract.

Morse snatched it up. "Don't be in such a rush," he complained. "It's just that I had something else in mind."

"I'll bet you did," Henry sneered. "Well, this is *my* process and I'll dictate the terms. I thought I was being very generous, only taking half the profits."

"Plus a grand a week," Morse reminded him.

"Peanuts," Henry said. "That's just so I'll have a little expense money coming in each week. And it'll be easier to explain to my wife why I'm closing my own studio if she sees something regular. Not," he amended, hastily, "that she's going to know how much I'm getting. A couple of hundred should keep her satisfied."

Morse looked up from his study of the contract. "What if you can't keep on making the right kind of pictures? Where does that leave me?"

"Right up that creek," Henry told him.

"But . . ." Morse started to protest.

"That's the chance you take. And besides, where will I be if I can't produce?"

"Sitting back with fifty grand of my money in your pocket," was the bitter answer.

"All life is a gamble," Henry said, loftily. "Are you going to sign or aren't you? I can't waste all day here."

Morse glared helplessly, reached for his pen reluctantly and signed the paper. Henry took the pen from him, signed his name and put the contract in his pocket. He kissed the pen softly and stuck it in his pocket, too.

"That's my pen," Morse protested.

"I'll buy you a new one. I want this one for a souvenir. And now," he said, "if you'll have your bookkeeper make out a check for my first week's salary, I'll be on my way. It's been a very tough day."

Morse pushed the intercom button. "Miss Jennings, have a check for one thousand dollars made out to Henry Milford. Charge it to my personal account."

"Wait a minute," Henry broke in. "Have them make out two checks. One for . . ." he thought for a moment. "One for two hundred, the other for eight. Two hundred's enough for Leora. If she thought you were paying

me more than that, she'd think you were crazy."

"I am," Morse told him bitterly, relaying the information.

They sat in silence while they waited for the checks, Morse chewing his nails, moodily. Miss Jennings finally came in, looked at Henry curiously and handed the checks to Morse. He fumbled for his pen.

"Use my new one," Henry said, graciously, handing it to him. "But don't forget to give it back." He grinned, wonderful—this new power.

Morse scribbled his signature and shoved the pen and the two checks over to Henry. "Here, Shylock."

Henry stuck the pen in his pocket, looked at the figures on the checks reverently, and stowed them away. He'd have to get a new wallet, he decided . . . a thousand dollars looked out of place in the old one.

He crossed to Morse and slapped him on the shoulder. "Cheer up, Boss. Think of all the money we're going to make. When do I start to work?"

Morse brightened a little. "This is Tuesday," he said. "I'll need a couple of days to decide how we'll use the pictures and to line up some

models. How about coming in Friday?"

"Fine," Henry started for the door. "Incidentally," he threw over his shoulder, magnanimously, "I won't charge you for the shots I made this morning. You can keep them for your private collection."

"Thanks," Morse said, leering. "See you Friday, about ten."

Henry nodded and left. He floated down the hall, past the receptionist. Wouldn't she be startled, he thought, if I told her about the funny little birthmark I noticed in one of her pictures. He grinned at her. She smiled back, cautiously.

"See you Friday," Henry said. "I'll be doing some special work here for a while."

"It will be nice having you with us, Mr. Milford," she said, as he left.

The next few days were the most pleasant Henry had ever spent. He opened a private checking account (in a different bank from the one where he and Leora had their's); bought some new clothes; made arrangements to have the balance of the work at the studio done by a printing service. He was darned if he was going to

waste his time printing pictures of babies.

He broke the news of his new job to an unbelieving Leora. He said nothing about the short hours, the money or the kind of work. When he finally convinced her, she threw her arms around him. For the first time in fifteen years, she looked at him with a gleam of respect in her eyes. Mr. Milford grinned to himself, wondering what she'd say if she knew the whole truth.

Friday, Henry showed up at his new job. A respectful receptionist escorted him to his new office. It was next to Morse's and almost as large and luxurious. He was bouncing happily in the comfortable chair back of the big desk when Morse came in.

Henry greeted him gaily. "Hi, Boss! All set for me to go to work?"

Morse nodded. "I've got six models waiting, and ten more coming in this afternoon. You may be only working one day a week," he said, grimly, "but brother, you're sure as hell going to grind out pictures on that one day. Let's go!" He turned, abruptly, and left the room, Henry following.

Three blondes, two bru-

nettes and a redhead were waiting in the camera room. Henry looked and gulped. He'd never even dreamed that dolls like these existed outside of magazine pictures. He was filled with admiration at the off-hand way Morse greeted the girls. Of course, he realized, this was old stuff to the boss. Maybe even he could get used to it after a while, but he doubted it. A little shiver of anticipation shook him.

"Do they know what's going to happen?" he whispered.

Morse shook his head and grinned, wickedly. "If they did, they'd sure as hell want more than the twenty-five bucks an hour they're getting. Though that ain't hay," he added, warningly. "Shoot your stuff as quickly as possible. There's a hundred and fifty dollars an hour standing there."

Henry became all business. He deliberated a moment, then pointed to the redhead. "You stay. The others go with Mr. Morse and I'll call you when I need you."

"I want to watch!" Morse wailed.

"Out!" Henry said, firmly. "I've got to work alone. I told you I couldn't stand to have anyone watching me."

Morse left, reluctantly, followed by the girls.

Henry's heart was beating rapidly as he posed the girl carefully. This was going to be fun, he thought. He grinned at the girl and she smiled back, sweetly. He made a few casual adjustments on the lights. That was the nicest part, he thought, happily. It didn't much matter what the lighting was... it was all in his mind.

He focused carefully, slid in a film holder and pulled the slide. Then he stood quietly, bulb in hand, staring at the girl.

Lovely, he thought. Leora had looked a little bit like that when they were married. She'd been pretty and slim and her hair had had golden lights all through it. He sighed, thinking what time and his wife's carelessness had wrought, then pulled his mind back to the job at hand.

The model sat there quietly, a sweet, trusting look on her face. Henry tried to imagine what she'd look like without any... his mind rebelled at what he was trying to do. The improper thoughts refused to come. He suddenly felt as though his Puritan ancestors stood behind him, staring disapprovingly. He glanced around, nervously.

A chill shook him. Beads of perspiration trickled down his forehead. He fumbled for a handkerchief, wiped them away. He tried again, grunting a little with the effort.

The girl looked at him apprehensively. "Is something wrong, Mr. Milford?" she asked.

"Oh, no," Henry assured her. In desperation, he made a couple of exposures, changed her position and made several more.

"That's all," he said, wiping his forehead again. "Thank you. Will you please send in one of the other girls. Any one."

She glanced at him curiously but said nothing as she left.

The next five were a repetition of the first sitting. Henry was filled with revulsion at what he was trying to do. He got it over quickly. He could not let himself think about it.

When the last girl had left, a beaming Morse came in. "Good boy," he said heartily. "You certainly did that job up in quick time."

Henry avoided his eyes. A strange foreboding filled him as he gathered up the exposed holders.

Morse looked at him, sharply. "Anything wrong?"

he demanded. "You look sort of sick."

Henry shook his head. "I'm all right," he mumbled. "I guess it's just that I'm not used to working so fast. Or maybe I ate something for breakfast that didn't agree with me. I did feel a little dizzy, but I'm all right now."

Morse leered at him. "Just not used to seeing so much pulchritude," he said, slyly. Moistening his lips, he continued, "How about getting them developed? I can hardly wait to see them."

"Shut up," Henry snapped. "And get out of here. I'll call you when they're ready." He went towards the darkroom.

"I sure wish I could watch you," Morse said, dejectedly.

Henry left without bothering to answer. The big slob, he thought. Drooling over the idea of seeing those nice girls undressed. He locked the door and went through the developing process mechanically. When the buzzer went off, he put them into the fixer. He sat there, in the dark, controlling his anxiety until he was sure the film had cleared.

Then he snapped on the light, took one of the films from the tank and looked at it. He choked, looked at the

others hurriedly, then staggered to a chair in the corner and collapsed. He sat there for a long time, his mind whirling, breathing heavily.

A pounding on the door snapped him out of it. Morse was yelling at him. "Aren't you done yet? What's holding up the parade? Let me in; I want to see them."

Henry crossed slowly to the door and unlocked it with trembling hands. Morse bounded in.

"How are they?" he asked, eagerly.

Henry pointed silently to the tank.

Morse grabbed at the first hanger, looked at it, gasped and reached for another one. Wordlessly, he examined the tankful, then turned to Henry, his face furious.

"Why . . . why . . . why . . ." he spluttered. "They're all dressed!"

Henry nodded, unhappily. "I know."

Morse advanced on him, forbiddingly. His voice was dangerously soft as he asked, "What happened?"

Henry didn't answer; just stood there looking miserable.

"Say something!" Morse roared.

"I couldn't do it," Henry said, dejectedly. "They look-

ed like such nice girls, I just couldn't imagine them being undressed."

"What the hell has that got to do with it?" Morse screamed.

Henry looked slightly puzzled. "I'm not quite sure," he said, slowly. "But I suspect it has everything to do with it."

"What do you mean?" Morse demanded.

Henry tried to explain. "I think it's part of the process. When I look at them while I'm taking their picture, I think . . . I think . . ." he halted.

"Go on."

"Well, I think about how they look . . ." Henry stopped, blushing.

Morse glared at him.

"Well, about how they'd look . . . undressed," Henry blurted. "And," he continued, defiantly, "they looked like such nice girls, and when I thought what we were going to do . . . how we were going to commercialize on it . . . I just couldn't do it. They were so unsuspecting and sort of trusting. I can do it for fun," he explained, "but I just can't do it for money."

Morse exploded. "You're fired!"

A dreamy smile spread over Henry's face. "Not for fifty-one more weeks," he said, softly. "I've got a contract."

"I'll break it!" Morse sneered.

Henry shook his head. "No you won't," he said, confidently. "There's nothing in the contract that says what *kind* of pictures I have to take. It only says that I agree to work one day a week for you. And that you agree to pay me a thousand dollars a week for one year." He stood there, beaming happily. And what a year it would be!

Morse's shoulders sagged. He was beaten and he knew it. He turned and left without a word.

Henry walked over to the tank and picked up one of the red head's negatives. Not bad, he thought, critically. A glow of pleasurable anticipation spread over him. His process might not work commercially, but he was willing to bet it would still work just for the fun of it. The prospect of a pleasant year loomed ahead and he sighed happily.

He'd have to get the red-head's name and address out of the files.

THE END

THE BIG TRANCE

By HARLAN ELLISON

You stand alone in a hypnotized city. Around you are helpless thousands completely in your power—waiting to obey your slightest command. Brilliant minds; beautiful bodies. Which will interest you most? You can degrade or inspire; aid or injure; satisfy your desires or theirs. It's up to you.

VICTOR MAINWARING had always wanted two things from that cornucopia known as life. Power and the love of a good woman. Not the sort of power that makes nations bend to one man's will, nor the sort of power that throws a world into war. Just the sort of *internal* power that makes others pause in the street and stare, thinking, "There goes someone to reckon with!" Which, when it comes right down to it, is a pretty reasonable and harmless sort of power to desire. The "good woman" had long since been decided upon by Victor as being Felice Winograd. He had worked beside her in Nedick's Times Square orange juice stand for over two years, and to him she was the ultimate in

beauty, refinement and desirability. It might be noted that Victor's standards were his own, and only peculiar insofar as *everyone's* standards are peculiar. But in any case, Sophia Loren and Kim Novak held no thrills for Victor Mainwaring, beside the slim, perspiring figure of Felice Winograd. Many were the times he yearned, within himself, for just those two things: power, and the love of Felice Winograd.

On Friday, July 14th, Victor got both.

First he got the *power*.

Then he got the love of Felice . . .

. . . and every other woman in the City of New York.

It is a constant. When reality is less than satisfactory, a certain breed of man



Helpless people were all around him—many "frozen" in grotesque postures.

will resort to dreams and artificial aids. So it had been with Victor. When his small attentions to Felice had brought him hardly any recognition from her direction, when his appeal for a three-dollar raise had gone unnoticed, he resorted to that dream factory where strength of body and spirit are manufactured. The advertisements of the pulp magazines. He read them avidly.

In one such, he had found a list of books that had been remaindered, gathered together by a wholesale outfit, and were being offered at a pittance. As his eyes ran down the columns of books being offered, pausing here and there to read the explanatory paragraph with each, his attention was drawn to one which said:

THE POWER OF HYPNOSIS!

Do you find yourself at sea when it comes to being forceful with others? Would you like to make people see things your way? Want to make yourself attractive to women, be the life of the party, entertain, mystify? This book is a rare edition, only a few copies at hand, so send at once, and learn how to hypnotize, and startle friends

and relatives. Only \$1.98 postpaid.

Consequently, he had taken a flyer. If reality could not bring him what he wanted, he would resort to artificial aids. So he had walked over to the post office, gotten a ten cent postal money order for one dollar and ninety-eight cents, and mailed it off to the Collossus Book Co. of Providence, Rhode Island.

Then he had gone home, prepared himself for the day's work—his shift went from two o'clock in the afternoon till nine-thirty at night—and promptly relegated the book "The Power of Hypnosis" to a rear segment of his mind. The next thirteen days went as uneventfully as they always did. He worked his shift beside Felice, dishing up hot dogs and paper cups of orange juice; he went to the seedy little movie houses along 42nd Street, he got his wavy brown hair cut, and once even went so far as to have a manicure.

Then, on Friday, July 14th, at ten o'clock in the morning, when the mail arrived, his entire life changed direction. Like a river, dammed up for centuries by alluvial deposits, suddenly freed and racing to the sea, Victor Mainwaring's

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life broke free of its silt, and streaked away for freedom. The book came, and he hurriedly stripped away the cardboard protecting shield, the wrapping paper, the twine. It was wrapped in a copy of the Providence, Rhode Island *Journal*, and after he had peeled away the newsprint, there it was, just as the advertisement had said it would be.

THE POWER OF HYPNOSIS by A. Ramakalandra III

Victor opened the book, and saw that much dust had caked in the backstrap. There was no dust wrapper on it, and the binding seemed to be a very fine sort of buckram. The title was engraved on the front cover in gold script, and the same on the title page.

In addition to the title and author credits, a line at the bottom of the page bore the perplexing legend:

Melancholia Press — Ruw-g-Jaupalat, 1658 B.C.

But that was sheer nonsense. Aside from the fact that he knew of no such place as the unpronounceable Ruw-g-Jaupalat, how could anyone print a book in 1658

B.C. and know it was B.C. No one can read the future . . . can they? And besides, that was long before printing presses, or even the English language. It must have been a typographical error, so common in these old books.

The mystery deepened, however, and explained away part of his objection on the next page. Where most books of this old vintage would delineate the type used, the sort of paper and the name of the printer, *this* volume said:

This book has been set in Tangibility Bold, set to read in any language the owner desires. The paper is rune-proof Koplis Bond with watermarked and prechanted endpapers. The printer is U. Isidumi & Sons. 1658 B.C.

Please Keep Away From Cauldrons and Deep Freezes

Victor Mainwaring read this with more than the usual amount of concern. What had he bought? Was this some sort of ringer, a charlatan-produced book of frippery when he so desperately needed help? His disappointment grew, for the typographical error he had supposed the date to be, was again repeated. But how

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could *anyone* call his time Before Christ, if it was . . . well, *before* Christ? His mystification grew, and he settled down in his one-room apartment's single chair. He turned the pages slowly and carefully, for the book crackled with each turning, obviously never having been opened before.

Then it dawned on him—if this book were *actually* as old as it seemed, what a hell of a remainder it must have been! From having seen the caliber of books remaindered in the book stores dotting 42nd Street, Victor decided this one must be a deuce of a stinker. But he began to read it, nonetheless, for one dollar and ninety-eight cents is not waste paper.

It was written in a literate style, and though he was completely unfamiliar with hypnosis and any of its sub-topics (Save a brief and unhappy excursion into Bridey Murphyism, which quickly convinced him he was a miserable one-lifer), he soon began to realize that the book knew, fully, of what it spoke about. He read with uncontained enthusiasm, for it did indeed tell him how to hypnotize and subject people's minds to his desires. It all seemed so clear.

The detailed instructions

for producing trances, post-hypnotic suggestions, etc. were not quite those he had grown to associate with stage mesmerists or television plays dealing with such subjects; but they seemed quite logical—in a sort of illogical way—and he was determined, before he had finished reading the volume, to try it out.

As he sat there in his underwear, turning the pages, vision after vision came to him. He would hypnotize Felice, and convince her she loved him greatly. He would hypnotize his section manager, and get that raise. He would hypnotize the fat slob who dropped in every afternoon at four to eat one hot dog and a plate of potato salad, and who always insulted him that the buns were cold. He would make *that* one think he was a dog in search of a hydrant. Oh, the visions came and went fleetingly, each one leaving Victor a little more certain he could do what the book suggested, and convincing him that this was the end to all his troubles.

He was only half correct.

This was the *beginning* of his troubles.

He finished the book at 1:30, and had to hurry to

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shower, brush his teeth, comb his hair, get dressed and take the bus to the stand. He made it ten minutes late, and the man he was to relieve, a horse-faced ex-stevedore who always burned the toast, a fellow named Krueger, was waiting, hands on beefy hips, with curses ready to be hurled.

"Waddaya think ya doin', Mainwain'? Ya think I got all day ta loaf aroun' here waitin' on ya? Fer Chrissakes, whyn't ya show up an' get 'ere on time, huh?" His mouth was loose-lipped and worked like a sphincter. Victor despised him. (A) Because he was bigger than Victor, (B) because he was a bully, and (C) because much against her wishes, Krueger liked his hands on Felice's body. Victor wished he had the nerve or the size or a big gun, to take Krueger to task.

Instead, he humbly apologized, got into his apron, and went to work. The book was in the inside pocket of his jacket. Victor was determined to try hypnotizing Felice before the day was over.

"Hello, Felice," he tried timidly, as he took up position behind the moving rollers on which the dogs

heated. She was cleaning off the counter with a damp rag, and threw him a sweet look over her right shoulder.

"Hello, Vic. Why didn't you answer that big creep? You gonna let him talk to you like that all your life?" Her voice was indignant, and for a moment he thought he detected interest in her tones. But he passed that off quickly as idle hoping, and shrugged his shoulders at her.

"What can I do? He'll tell the boss if I make a fuss."

She pursed her lips and batted her full eyelashes angrily, and turned away to wait on a customer.

Oh, boy, now I did it, he thought, sinkingly. Now she's sore at me but good.

But as the afternoon passed noisily into evening on Times Square, Felice forgot her annoyance, and they worked shoulder to shoulder, seldom touching, but Victor always feeling the warmth of her close by. It was pleasant, even working at such a menial task as dishing up potato salad, just to be beside her. Then at five o'clock, when it was Felice's workday's end, and Victor was off for dinner (which he usually felt obligated to eat at Nedick's, and which invariably

gave him heartburn), he approached her. "H-how would you like to eat dinner with me before you go home, Felice?"

She looked at him as though she were seeing him for the first time, and her cheeks blushed prettily. "Well, sure, I guess that'd be real nice, Vic. Yeah, sure, let's go."

So Victor took Felice to The Grotto on West 46th Street, where they went into the back dining room—that has tin foil walls and looks like a cave—and had Italian food that made Felice feel like she was really *someone*, and gave Victor even more acute heartburn. While they were sipping their *espresso*, Victor excused himself, and went into the men's room. He took the book from his jacket pocket, and read again, hurriedly, the chapter on basic trances, and how to put people into them. This was to be the moment!

—He ran over the peculiar phrases several times, and marveled again that not once did the word "sleep" appear in them. That was very peculiar, he was sure. Every stage hypnotist he had ever seen, had said *sleep* many times. He shrugged; it didn't matter. Not if the phrases

worked and Felice was hypnotized.

(It might be noted that Victor had a great deal of faith in the printed word. If the book said it would put people into trances, then by George, it *would*! It might also be noted at this point that Victor was gullible to a fault at odd moments. But then, that is what makes Victor Victor and not someone else.)

He flipped through the pages quickly, as the text referred him to an appendix note. The note held several diagrams for finger positions and thoughts to think, while trancing. Victor thought this rather odd, but he scratched the small line on the underside of his stubby nose, and committed the rules to memory. Then he put the volume back in his jacket pocket, patted it affectionately, and decided to comb back his almost-auburn hair. It wouldn't look good to be trancing under anything but optimum conditions.

The restaurant had cleared out pretty much, when he threaded back through the tables; the crowd had filtered out to make the theatres. But Felice was enchanted by it all; Victor conjectured that this was perhaps the first

time she had eaten in an off-Broadway restaurant. It was quite a change for her—from slinging food, to having it served to her in such a nice place. Victor suddenly felt patronizing, and caught himself. Then he felt violent qualms about what he was going to do.

In fact, he realized, it was on the verge of being cad-dish! *Verge, hell*, his thoughts tracked each other, it is *cad-dish, and bounderish, too!*

But he sat down at the table, determined, anyhow.

"Felice," he said timidly, though he did not *feel* timid inside, "would you like to see something interesting? Something I've had for a hobby for a long time? Something I've been practicing and've been wanting to show you?"

He knew he'd asked too many questions at once, but was gratified by her quick flash of a smile. "What is it, Vic?"

"You ever been hypnotized?" he asked, grinning disarmingly.

She made a ts-k-ts-k sound and wagged a finger at him. "Oh, now, come on Vic! I know all about that stuff. You can't hypnotize me, no one ever could." Her face darkened. "I remember one guy at a party tried to do it, and

then he tried to..." She stopped. Then, "Hey! You ain't got no ideas, have ya?"

Victor stopped her protests with a hand. "No, no, this is strictly a scientific experiment; I've got no ulterior motives." He was lying in his well-lined-up teeth.

She smiled slowly, and pointed out, "You know what they say. No one'll do anything under hypnosis that goes against their morals." She smiled again, and Victor began to hope that Felice's morals had feet of clay.

"Well, let's see what happens," he said gayly, "all in the spirit of fun." Felice agreed, and they settled back to begin the experiment.

According to the instructions in the book, Victor was first supposed to *think* he could hypnotize. He was to think this with all his might and mind; till he left no room for what the book had called "negating doubt," in his mind. He was also to think—sequentially—about rhinoceros horns, fifty-eight foot high wals, ladies' underwear, and frogs.

Victor found these last somewhat perplexing, but if the book said he was supposed to do it, then he was going to do it. Victor's gulli-

bility for the printed word was occasionally monstrous.

So he thought about what he was supposed to think about, got them spinning nicely in his head, and went on to the finger positions. The left hand palm-forward before the subject's face, thumb and forefinger making a circle, the remaining three fingers as rigid as possible. Right hand: thumb and fourth finger making a circle across the palm; lay the hand next to the other, palm-up, remaining three fingers extended full.

He did precisely as the instructions had commanded.

Then he went into the chant . . .

"Descend, descend, descend. By the runes of the Mother Tongue. By the cabal of Gooryalat and the fanged mouth of Osi-Uvu. Descend. Trances of the upper air, trances of fire, trances of Earth and water, attend me. Commands made to be sensed in that realm where all things stand as all things stand when the call relieves its original sins! Descend."

As he began to speak, her eyes flickered shut. As his words progressed, her body twitched slightly, grew limp, and finally teetered sidewise

in the chair. In a few seconds, Felice Winograd was completely hypnotized.

"Oh, Boy!" Victor rejoiced, as visions of sins danced in his head.

He sat with finger in mouth for a moment, trying to decide—now that he had her where and how he wanted her—how to phrase his desire. Finally, he said to her, "Felice. When you wake up, you'll have no recollection of this trance. But you'll be willing, no matter what I suggest . . . and you'll love me."

Then he snapped his fingers fourteen times, as the book had indicated he should.

Nothing happened.

Nothing at all.

Felice did not move a twitch.

He snapped his fingers fourteen times again. Still no movement. Then he noticed something very strange: the few patrons still in the dining room, they too were immobile. One fat man with a blobby nose had a forkful of spaghetti halfway to his mouth, poised in mid-air. The spaghetti was hanging limply—not unwinding.

A woman across the aisle had been wiping her mouth, and looked very strange with the napkin half in her mouth, and her eyes shut as she had

them the moment of wiping. A waiter was halted in the passageway between the front and rear dining sections, one foot in mid-step, a tray balanced precariously. Nobody moved.

The truth dawned with a slam. The truth caught Victor in the back of the neck, and gave him a rabbit punch. The book was a good book . . . in fact *too* good. That was probably why it had been remaindered: No authoritative text would be reduced for quick-sale, but one that had small defects in it—such as putting a roomful of people into a trance instead of just one—would be. Victor was frantic. The power of the trance was strong, plenty strong.

He whipped out the book and re-read the section on TRANCES, BRINGING PEOPLE OUT OF. But all it said was that the fourteen-snap finger method should work. And it didn't. Victor was getting even *more* worried. What if their *entire* bodies were immobile? What if their hearts and brains were in trance, too? Then all these people—he counted twelve of them—would die when their bodily functions stopped.

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But Felice was breathing, he could see her ample bosom rising and falling regularly. So were the rest of them.

Well, then, they were safe on that count, but he was going to have to get them out of it. He realized immediately that he needed competent aid. He would go to the police, at once.

There was undoubtedly one on Broadway.

He slipped back his chair, kissed Felice, telling her deaf ears, "I'll be right back, dear. Don't go away."

Then he was running past the poised waiter, knocking the tray to the floor, apologizing to the unheeding statue, and streaking through the front dining room.

He noted, in rapid passing, that everyone there, also, was in a trance. "Oh, boy," he muttered aloud, not meaning it as he had before. Not meaning it that way at all.

How many years in jail could they give him for this? Was it illegal, or just simply immoral.

Then he was on the street, racing down toward Broadway. Traffic seemed to have come to a stop. The pedestrians weren't making much time either.

Then he was out on Times Square.

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"Oh, no!"

This was the *big* trance. New York City was hypnotized.

It took him over two hours to realize the extent of his trancing. Whether it had been the imperfect nature of the book's instructions and theories, to begin with, or whether the age of the chants had done it, or perhaps because the trance had been delivered inside walls of tin foil, strengthening and changing it as it went out—whatever it was, the effects were complete. Not a person in the city moved. For a wild moment Victor thought perhaps the entire *world* was under the trance, but when he turned on a radio in one of the cigar stores on Broadway, he heard voices and singing. That satisfied him for the moment, but as he turned the radio off he wondered if perhaps that hadn't been transcribed or on tape. Now that he thought about it, he'd had to turn for some time till he got even *that*.

The thought was pretty frightening.

He walked head-bent-down through the clogged Times Square area, having little trouble making passage, merely side-stepping the in-

animate objects littering the sidewalks. It was a pretty neat puzzler, and to help himself think, he wanted a cigarette. Victor smoked very seldom, and never carried a pack, but once in a great while the smoke cleared his mind. A man was standing outside a Whalen's, just ripping the cellophane off a pack. Victor absently walked up, took the deck from the man's unresisting fingers, and withdrew a cigarette from the pack. He replaced the pack, fished in the man's pocket for a match, came up with a gold lighter, lit the cigarette, replaced the lighter, started to walk away, and stopped. Cold. Dead. Completely.

"Wow!" he said, thinking instantly how adolescent it had sounded along the silent Broadway stretch.

Maybe not such a problem after all. He had the whole world to do with as he liked. He could rob every bank in the city, get enough money, never to have to work another day in his entire life. He could have fun with any woman he wanted without any trouble (not much response, either, he mused ruefully, but then you can't have *everything*!). He could get even with every doorman and bus driver who had ever snubbed

him or insulted him. He could see the world free of charge. He could learn to fly and learn to pilot a ship. He could...

He did.

He walked back, and took the rest of the pack of cigarettes from the tranced buyer. He was about to take the lighter, too, but something made him stop. Hell, there were a million better lighters in shops all along the street. He walked away with a jaunty half-hop, and decided to stop in somewhere for a drink. That was one thing Victor *did* enjoy—he just could not afford it on Nedick's salary. He snapped his fingers in disdain at the thought of Nedick's. Phuff on them!

He went into a swank ebony and glass bar and found himself a place at the bar. Then he realized the bartender was frozen in trance, too, so he leaned over and took the martini shaker from the man's hands. He had to get off the stool and walk around to get a martini glass, but as he poured the pale crystal liquid, he grinned to himself.

"And if you ever come out of this," he said to the bartender, "you'll forget this command, but whenever I come in, you'll mix me all the

drinks I want for free. And don't water them on me."

He sat down and drank the martini. It was watery; the ice had completely melted and the drink was warm. He made a wry face, and mixed himself one from the best stock on the shelves. It wasn't as good as a professional could do, but then, it *was* free.

The street was too damned quiet for anything, so Victor took a stroll up to 42nd and looked in at Nedick's. The relief man was still on—you're gonna have a *real* long shift tonight, buddy-o, Victor wanted to mumble—and still smiling at a cute redhead with big ears who was accepting a tuna fish salad sandwich. Victor walked away, hands in pockets. Somehow the city wasn't right this way. New York *had* to have noise. If it didn't, it was just an empty, listless hulk. He strolled down the sidewalk every now and then pinching an attractive girl, every now and then stopping in some shop to select an item that caught his eye.

It took him a week to get bored with the whole thing.

He had spent the day returning things he had "borrowed" from shops. They were mostly superfluous anyhow, and he saw no reason to

become a thief—even if only in his own eyes—if it didn't please him. And there was no thrill at all in kissing a tranced female, no matter how beautiful she was.

He had wandered through the lobbies of most hotels, found a few celebrities listed on the check-in books, and gone up to their rooms to see them in person, but once there, so what? He had even come across one chesty, brassy-haired movie star whom he had bussed, and instructed to call him if and when she came out of the trance. "You're going to throw me a surprise party the night you get un-tranced," he instructed her, and left.

That had taken a week. A week all alone, wandering in and out, up and down, and enjoying nothing. Loneliness was eating him up inside.

Finally, he sat down with the book, in an effort to find out what could have gone wrong, and how to rectify the error. Because by this time he had realized he *must* bring things back to normal. If he did not, he would soon go mad from boredom and loneliness.

The book was detailed about in-trancing, but somehow, the more he read it over, the more certain he was

that the instructions for out-trancing were all wrong, all wrong. He sat down and dissected the sentences, word for word, and finally hit the difficulty.

As he had suspected about another segment of the book, *this* portion held a typographical error. A very dangerous and annoying one. Where the manuscript should have read "clap" it said "snap." So that the section which advised *clapping* the hands fourteen times to un-trance, had only made things worse.

Victor was confident this was the answer, and he was about to do as the book *should* have said, when he got a strong qualm. If he let everyone out of the trance state, he would lose control over them. He was pretty sure he could command everyone to do what he wanted them to do, when they came out of it, and somehow the command would be carried to everyone. But again, he didn't really want that. It was no fun having everyone do what you wanted them to, if you knew they were only doing it because they'd been put under post-hypnotic suggestion.

So Victor wandered out again, and decided at least to set a few things right before he released them all.

He looked up Krueger's address in the phone book, and went over to the bully's apartment on West 34th Street. The big man was in bed, sleeping, still tranced, and Victor had only a moment's hesitation before he hauled off and popped the big slob in the eye. It was swelling, even as Victor said, "And from now on, you grease-monkey, when you see me, you call me, 'Mr.'" Then Victor left, feeling very good.

He saw a blind man on the street, with a tin cup, and he instructed everybody to give the man a dollar as they passed him.

He walked into the swankiest hotel dining room in town, found the manager's office, wrote out his name and address on a card, and put it in the man's hand, saying, "Call me when you get out of this . . . you want me for your *maitre de* at twice the salary the guy you've got now gets."

Then he went back to The Grotto for the first time in a week.

He was surprised to see Felice still looked awfully good to him, even after the beautiful women he had met during the past week. She was honest, and clean-cut and

well, just right for his taste. But he wasn't sure he wanted her to be his love, if she was hypnotically conditioned to wanting it. He wanted her honestly.

He realized with a start that the week had changed him pretty severely. The ruthless and unhealthy portions of his character that had been festering within him for so long, sublimated only by his backward nature, waiting to be let out to rampage like mad dogs, had altered not-so-subtly. He was now ashamed of many things he had done during the week, and wanted to make up for it somehow.

But how?

What could he do?

Then an idea came to him, and he thought about it for a long, long time before he stood up, cupped his hands to his mouth, and said, "When you all come out of this trance, there will be no desire to fight in any of you. You will not hate anybody else, no matter what they've done to you, and the thought of war will be so terrible you'll start destroying your stockpiled arms at once."

Then he sat down again. That was as good a deed as any man could do. Pity no one would ever know that the

saviour of mankind had been Victor Mainwaring.

He stared across at Felice. It wouldn't be right to have her shackled to him for the rest of her life, if deep inside her she didn't love him. He rescinded the order of love he had given her a week before.

Then he sat there, feeling dejected, feeling lost and empty. He had all this power, but what good was it doing *him*? Then he remembered the blind man, and he stood up again, cupped his hands again, and said loudly, "First of all, the government shall never want to tax me, when they come out of this. Second, anybody with ten dollars or more in their pocket, shall either give me or mail me a dollar a week for the next ten years. If it won't strap them."

Then he announced his name and address. Finally he clapped his hands fourteen times.

The waiter fell over as he slipped in the spilled stuff from the dumped tray.

The woman across the aisle wiped her face and got up from the table.

Outside, cars began to move, and people went on to catch shows a week old.

Felice started, and blinked her eyelashes prettily.

Several people came in,

walked over to Victor's table, and laid down a dollar bill, shaking his hand. Felice just stared.

"Wh-what are they doing that for?" she said, reaching into her handbag and putting a dollar in front of Victor.

He didn't answer, but leaned across and took her hand, "Felice, will you marry me?" he said bluntly.

Her cheeks turned pink, and she looked away, but her hand tightened in his, and Victor was sure that she would say yes someday soon. He was perfectly happy to give her time.

"Let's go," Victor said, getting up.

"We'll have a drink over at the Waldorf bar—the bartender there doesn't water the martinis on me—and then perhaps we'll go to a party."

Felice was thrilled. "Oh! Who's having a party?"

"A friend of mine. She just got married. I think her name is Miller now, Marilyn Miller."

They left the restaurant, and all down the street, the dollar bills kept coming.

Victor stopped off at Whalen's and bought a big box of matches. He had something to burn when he got home. And it *wasn't* time.

THE END
DREAM WORLD

George was a typical Mr. Milquetoast. Timid, fearful, miserable. Then he was given a startling power. He tried it out by slugging a bully in a tavern, went on to dominate a lush gangster's moll, and then took a seat in a hundred-thousand-dollar poker game. All because he'd become—

THE MAN WHO COULDN'T LOSE

By G. L. VANDENBURG

IT WAS Friday morning and George Wellington was happy. He was also late for breakfast. Precisely thirty seconds late. He had never before failed to sit at the breakfast table on the dot at 8 A.M.

But his break with precedent left George unruffled. It was Friday! The last day of a dreary, working week. He would be in his office at 9 A.M., do his job conscientiously as always and return to his two-storey bungalow on East Elm Street at exactly 5:35 P.M. His sister Elvira, who lived with him and was supported by him, would have dinner on the table at 6:00 P.M. Not a minute sooner, not a minute later. At 6:30 dinner would be over.

That was the time George

Wellington looked forward to.

At 6:35 he would leave the house and walk five blocks to the Marietta Bar and Grill. Three beers later he would leave the bar and return home. By 8:30 he would be fast asleep. Short but welcome relief.

This ritual had been performed for exactly six hundred and fifty-two Fridays, a period covering some twelve and a half years. George lived a life as unvaried as the hands on a self-winding clock.

As he sat down to breakfast he thought of Marietta's Bar and could almost taste the foam frosted, tangy beer trickling down his throat. Those two hours were sacred to him.

His reverie was shattered by a discordant voice.

"Well, it's about time, George Wellington!" Elvira eyed the antique clock above the mantle. "If I had known you planned to be late for breakfast I would have waited with the eggs. They're probably icy by now!"

He tucked a neat white napkin under his chin and his tone was apologetic. "I hadn't planned to be late, Elvira. I really don't think the eggs have had a chance to freeze in thirty seconds."

When the antique clock struck 8:30 George was still immersed in the morning paper, casually spooning his coffee.

"Lord Almighty, George Wellington, *will you hurry!* Don't you care about being on time for work? No, I don't imagine you do. Suppose *Pierce and Andrews* upped and fired you? Where would that put us? Out in the street more than likely."

Elvira Wellington had a habit of asking and answering her own questions. She never let her brother get a word in. She manipulated his life on the pretext that he was her *little* brother and he needed looking after.

Elvira was efficient. But

George often wondered if her efficiency wasn't outweighed by her constant nagging and badgering.

Whenever he tried to inject a degree of novelty into the hum-drum routine of things she was on hand to shame him out of it. If he occasionally wanted a little fun she was right there to remind him that life was a duty. A reverent, decorous duty.

George yearned for the courage to openly rebel, to tell Elvira what he had so often told himself: *If it weren't for me she'd be starving to death!*

His longing for rebellion remained stifled by habit and routine. He had become content to pray—as he had prayed for twelve long years—that Elvira would get married and have children and lead a life of her own.

But the years had trickled by and his hope of such good fortune had long ago flickered out. Deep down he had resigned himself to be stuck with an old maid sister until the day she died . . . or he did. . . .

The day went, as usual. Contrary to Elvira's fears *Pierce and Andrews* would not have fired him for such a flimsy reason as being late



The fat man lost again. Was he softening George for the kill?

for work, although tardiness on his part would have been something of a shock to them. George was the finest records analyst with the firm, but having had humility and decorum drummed into him at home, he was not aware of his value to the company.

That evening, in his haste to enjoy his solitary two hours at the tavern George arrived home at 5:34, one minute ahead of schedule.

"You're early, George!" Elvira arched her eyebrows. "What's wrong? What's happened? You were late for work and they fired you!" Before he could produce a reply she redoubled her attack. "George Wellington, what on earth is that on the cuffs of your pants?"

"Huh?" He looked down at the area in question. "Oh, while I was standing at the bus stop—well, I guess there was a mud puddle in the road—and a truck—"

"A truck went by and simply ruined your best pair of trousers! And you just stood there like a ninny and let it happen! Sometimes I don't know what to think of you!" She sighed like a well-fed martyr. "Well, you'd best go upstairs and put on an old pair of pants."

A plaintive smile crossed

his lips. "Elvira, this is my night out."

"Then just change into something clean. You can't go out looking like that. Not even to a bar and grill!" Emphatic contempt was put upon the words "bar and grill." It had long been Elvira's notion to keep George pure *every* night of the week by persuading him to abandon his only extra-curricular activity.

But on this score alone, she failed.

"Evening, Mr. Wellington." Chester was an emaciated little bartender with thimble-size pouches under each eye. He drew George's beer as he issued the salutation.

"What's new Chester?"

"There's never nuthin' new when you get here, Mr. Wellington. Only after you leave and the late crowd comes is anything ever new. By the time you come around a week later it ain't new no more." He slid a glass of beer in front of George.

Out of habit George chug-a-lugged the first one. Aside from the comforting effect it had on his parched throat there was a certain boldness in the act that provided an inner satisfaction. ■

He smacked his lips and gave Chester a five-dollar-bill. Accustomed to George's routine, the bartender deducted the price of three beers and slipped him his change.

George had over an hour to go. He would nurse the next two. He settled himself on a stool and gave the tavern a casual once over. There were three other customers. On his left an elderly gentleman occupied a stool at the far end of the bar. On his right, seated in a booth, was a girl.

The third customer was a bejeweled giant wearing a leather jacket and dungarees and too much grease in his hair. He was talking to the girl. George could not hear the conversation, but it appeared that the man was annoying the young lady. He had pulled up a chair and straddled it beside the booth, and there was an arrogant look of self-importance on his face that George didn't like.

Every so often the girl would toss a few words out of the side of her mouth, but she refused to look at the man.

"Chester, why do you allow a fellow like that in your place?"

The bartender looked in the

direction of the man and the girl and shrugged. "She can take care of herself."

"But that man is bothering her!"

"He bothers everybody," said Chester, "but people ain't about to tangle with him. Used to be a prizefighter. What are you gonna do? You gotta take the bad with the good."

George nursed his beer and watched the girl grow angrier. She wouldn't take the bad with the good much longer.

During moments like this George became a dreamer, wishing he had the courage to use his six feet, hundred-seventy pounds exacting justice for the wronged and oppressed.

Why don't you do it, pal? Go on, you've got what it takes. One good right cross and that gorilla will fold up like a paper bag.

George spun himself around on his stool. "What did you say, Chester?"

Chester stopped wiping a glass. "I didn't say nuthin'."

George looked toward the other end of the bar. The elderly gentleman was bent over his drink, paying attention to nothing else.

I'm talking to you, pal! You! Nobody else. Now's the

time! Go on, give that bum the business!

George jumped down from his stool and strode over to where the man was bothering the girl. His hand went out and latched onto the shoulder padding of the leather jacket. He twisted the man's shoulder around. "That will be all, mister."

The man looked up, scowling. "Who the hell are you?"

"Just leave this young lady alone."

"Hold on a minute, Mac! You know who you're talking to?"

"I don't care. You were annoying this young lady. That isn't a very gentlemanly thing to do."

The hoodlum grinned. "Well, aren't we just too, too dainty..."

The mysterious voice cut in sharply. *Now, pal, now! Fake a move with your left, then give it everything you got with your right below the heart!*

George jerked his left hand back six inches. The big man crouched. George drove a vicious punch right below the heart as per instructions. It was fun. He tried a left, that was even more fun. Then, regretfully, he stopped. There was nothing more to hit. Leather Jack-

et was stretched out on the floor.

The bartender rushed over and applied cold towels. George's heart throbbed, his fists remained clenched as he stared dumbly at the big fellow. For the moment he didn't think about the voice that had commandeered the assault. He didn't think about anything. He was in a trance, and couldn't comprehend the thing he had done.

Chester, kneeling beside the heckler, looked up. "What the hell did you do, Mr. Wellington? This guy won't wake up!"

"Is he—is he dead?" George muttered.

"Hell, no! But he just won't come to, you know what I mean? If you'd been wearing gloves I'd swear you had horseshoes in them!"

George slowly faced the girl. She was still sitting in the booth, looking into her glass, paying no attention to the incident. It was the first close look George had taken. She was in her middle twenties, wearing a black slicker tied at the waist, red beret and heavy make-up.

George looked toward the bar. The old gentleman was gone, frightened away by the fracas. A look back at the

bartender found him shaking his head over the still limp body. Another look at the girl. Her eyes remained glued to the table, her rouged face was expressionless.

George shook his head like a groggy fighter. He had thought he heard a voice give him instructions. But there was no voice now. He must have imagined it. He took two hesitant steps toward the girl's booth.

"I—I'm sorry, miss—I thought you—"

The girl turned her head. Her drooping eyes met his. She manufactured a faint unhappy smile. "What do you do for an encore, buddy?"

Her cold tone puzzled George. Maybe she had wanted to be picked up. Chester had told him she could take care of herself. George backed away, embarrassed. "I'm sorry—really I—" He bumped into a table. The girl continued to stare at him.

Chester got to his feet and took George by the arm. "Come on, I better give you something to bolster you up, Mr. Wellington."

"No, thanks, Chester—I—I better—be going—"

"Come on," the bartender insisted. "You may not want it but you sure need it."

Chester was right. George

looked himself up and down in the mirror. He put his hands to the bar to keep them from jrembling.

"Chester, do you think the young lady is angry? I mean did she really want the man to pick her up or something?"

"Who knows?" said Chester with a grin. "All I know is when some of the crowd hears what you did you'll probably have people asking for your autograph."

The bourbon was one hundred proof. It was the first hard whiskey of George's unexplored life and it went down like a burning torpedo. But once down it made him feel better. He ordered another...

When George reached the street he turned suddenly. It wasn't the liquor, he told himself. And it wasn't the cold air that blasted him in the face as he opened the tavern door. It was what he had done. It had caused a dull, twisting ache deep down in his stomach. When he reached up to brush his hair back he noticed his hands were quivering again.

His stomach pitched and rolled. Grimly, he fought nausea—turned his mind from it.

He couldn't believe that he, George Wellington, records analyst, white collar worker, creature of non-violence, could have beat up another man. To say nothing of a man bigger than himself. He hugged the building, unable to move, trying to repel a surge of terror that poured through him. It was the most soul shattering experience he had ever known.

Now just relax, pal. You know—I'm glad I ran across you. That's some right upper-cut you have.

George jerked his head around in the direction the voice seemed to come from. He saw nothing. The street was empty. The fluorescent street lamp glared at him from above. He heard an amused chuckle.

Don't look for me. You won't see me.

"Who are you?" George demanded halfheartedly. "Why did you make me hit that man?"

I didn't make you do anything you didn't want to do, pal. Besides, the jerk had it coming, didn't he?

"Well, yes—but—"

Then don't worry about it. Just pull yourself together and get a lot of sleep tonight. You're going to have a busy day tomorrow. I'll see you—

I mean I'll be around again.

"Wait a minute," George pleaded. "Don't leave me—" His eyes darted from side to side to see if anyone was watching him. The street was still empty. He waited for a moment. The voice did not speak again. There was nothing left to do but follow its counsel and get some sleep. With some effort he lifted first one foot, then the other and trudged on toward home. . . .

As he passed the newsstand at the corner of Third and Main, just two blocks from his house, the voice returned.

I forgot something.

George froze in his tracks. There were other people milling around the newsstand. He eyed them carefully to see if any of them could hear what he was hearing.

Get a copy of the Morning Herald. There's a front page story you should read. Maybe it'll clear a few things up for you.

No one at the newsstand acknowledged the statement. He was certain that only he had heard the voice. That made him feel even worse. But he obeyed the instructions and tossed a nickle on the counter.

"Morning Herald!" He was surprised at the ring of authority in his voice.

The news dealer, a ruddy complexioned, toothless man, grinned coily and said, "Why, Mister Wellington, you haven't had a nip out of the old bottle now, have you?"

George didn't answer. Instead his eyes met the news dealer's and stayed there. He continued to perform a mental autopsy until the news dealer got fidgety and took a step backward.

"I was only kidding, Mr. Wellington. Here's your *Morning Herald*."

"Thank you," George said softly. He took the paper and ambled away, leaving the news dealer utterly confused.

Now you're getting the feeling, pal! It's as easy as pie, isn't it?

"I wish you'd go away and leave me alone," said George.

There was no reply, George stopped walking and looked around. In a moment he resumed his journey toward the two-storey bungalow. He would have given anything if only that feeling in the pit of his stomach would go away. . . .

It was ten minutes to nine when George entered the

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house. Elvira was sitting close to the front door so as not to miss him when he arrived.

"Well, you ought to be ashamed of yourself, George Wellington! Do you realize how late you are! Exactly twenty—"

"Twenty minutes. So what is that to you?" George said coldly.

Elvira retreated as the aroma of expensive bourbon drifted under her small but sensitive nose. "Liquor!" It was all she could manage to say.

George hung up his coat. Elvira stood there with her mouth hanging open.

George slammed the front door, jarring her, and went upstairs to his room without another word.

After locking his door he unfolded the *Morning Herald* and gazed at the headline which blackened its front page:

ROD LUNDIGAN SLAIN!

The story below told how the well known underworld leader had been found in his swank apartment with a bullet in his heart.

It was several hours before George could get to sleep. . . .

George arrived at the table

for breakfast at twenty-nine minutes after eight the next morning. His eggs were cold and shriveled.

"George Wellington, you seem determined to outdo yourself every time you're late. If you don't appreciate my work perhaps you'd like to do without it!"

"Perhaps I would," he declared indifferently.

"George!"

Hey, what's the matter, pal? You don't look much better this morning than you did last night!

George shivered. There was no use looking around. He knew he wouldn't find anything if he did. That's what worried him, what made it all too possible that George Wellington was ready for the booby hatch. Desperately, he ignored the voice.

"Elvira, leave me alone."

"No, George, there's something wrong with you. I knew it when you got home last night. And unless I miss my guess you've met a woman. Now I've warned you about women, George."

"I am not involved with a woman, Elvira—"

The voice cut in impatiently.

Look, pal, you don't argue with a dame like this.

"No? Well, what do I do?"

"George, who are you talking to?"

"Keep quiet, Elvira."

You've got to stand up and let her have it right between the eyes.

"Let her have what right between the eyes?"

"George, perhaps I'd better call Doctor Ellis."

"Stay where you are, Elvira!"

That's it, pal! You're the boss in this house. All you have to do is start acting like it! Go to it. Show her you mean business.

George rose from the table, threw his shoulders back and jammed his index finger into Elvira's chest. "Now listen to me, Elvira! This is *my* house. You'd better start realizing it. If you don't like my terms you can pack up and leave."

Elvira broke into tears and ran upstairs to her room.

George Wellington left his house that morning, a different man. A cold, tough exterior had replaced the meek, subservient quality he had owned before. The voice of Rod Lundigan, dead racketeer, was sending him on a mission, for what reason George did not know. He had been given an address and he knew he had to go there, he wanted to go. He had no idea

what would happen once he arrived.

The apartment building was in the swank Forestview section of town. The elevator man let him off at the fourteenth floor and pointed to apartment 14-F.

Before pressing the buzzer George went through one final rehearsal of the voice's instructions in his mind. Then he tugged his coat collar close around his neck and put his hands in his pockets, thumbs out. He only rarely smoked but for this occasion he lit a cigarette and let it dangle from his lips.

Good going, Mr. Wellington! exclaimed the voice. *Good going!*

"Yes!" George agreed, bewilderedly written on his face. "Not a bad showing if I do say so myself!"

Shall we get right down to business, Mr. Wellington?

"Now wait a minute," George interjected. "First of all I want to know who you are. Or what you are."

Didn't you read the Morning Herald like I told you?

"Yes, but it didn't clear anything up for me like you said it would."

The voice sighed. *Okay, let me clear it up for you now. What did the headline say?*

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"Something about a man named — ah — Lundigan getting killed. He was a racketeer."

Please! the voice winced. *You shouldn't believe everything you read in the newspapers. It happens that I sold protection. You know, like insurance. It was a very respectable racket—business.*

"You!" George gulped. gulped. "You mean you're—you—it's impossible—I mean—you're dead—aren't you? The paper—I read—"

Dead as they come, pal. And that's why I need you. You see, I have a pretty good idea who did the job but I have to be sure before I can take action.

"If you're dead I don't see how you can take action anyway."

I can't, pal. But you can.

"Me? Oh, no—no, thanks. If it's all the same to you I already have a job that keeps me pretty busy."

Now I'll give you all the help I can. All you have to do is follow a few simple instructions.

"Yes, but—"

And you'll have to be a pretty good actor to pull this off, said the voice, ignoring George's pleas. *You see, I picked on you for a very special reason.*

"Now wait a minute, Mr.—
Mr.—"

George sensed an invisible grin as the voice came again. *What's the matter? Not scared, are you?*

"I don't know. I—"

Don't ever let on you're scared of anything. You'll get a lot of respect that way. For instance that character in the bar last night is going to think twice before he ever tangles with you again, see what I mean?

"What is it you'd like me to do, Mr. Lundigan?"

Look—have you ever been to Forestview?

"I'm afraid that section of town is a little rich for my blood."

Not anymore. There's a girl lives there in the Markensfield Apartments. Suite 14-F. A real plush joint. I should know. I bought it for her.

"She was your girl?"

You could say that, yes. Her name is Julie. You'll go there to see her. Only when you get there you're not going to be George Welling-ton—

"Who am I going to be?" George asked with a puzzled frown.

Sit down, mister and listen carefully. If you can carry this off well enough you're go-

ing to be a big man—a very big man!

George lit a cigarette, took a nervous drag, and let it dangle from his lips.

The girl who came to the door would have made an hour glass look like an ice cube. She was a brunette with an ingratiating smile and a bosom ready to spill out of a form fitting dress. She looked as soft and fragile as a kitten.

"What can I do for you?"

George stared, wondering how such a beautiful, innocent looking creature ever got mixed up in the rackets. Wondering didn't clarify things.

"Come on, Mister, are you selling something? What do you want?"

He gave the door a gentle shove with his foot. It swung open revealing an immense plush living room.

The girl turned suddenly nervous. "Look—I got no time—" She moved to close the door. George raised his arm. His eyes didn't leave the girl's.

"Look, who are you, mister? What do you want?"

George stared her into the room and kicked the door shut behind him. He glanced around at the expensive ultra-modern furniture.

"Comfortable place you have here, Julie."

"How did you know my name?"

He stood silent.

A sense of recognition and fear swept her face. "You—you're a friend of Rod's!"

"More than a friend." He put his hand on her shoulder and moved her aside to open the bedroom door; went over and checked the closet. Julie followed him, toying nervously with the sash on her dress.

"I don't think I understand," she said.

"Maybe I'm the man Rod took orders from."

The girl tried to smile but could only manage a shock-inspired grin. "Well, gee, mister, any friend of Rod's is a friend of mine, you know what I mean? If you tell me what it is you're after I might be able to help you."

"I'm just having a look around. You don't mind, do you?"

"Hell, no!" she said. "Be my guest, mister." Somehow the profanity seemed all wrong coming from her mouth. George felt sorry for her. In a strange way, he thought, she was like him. She too had gotten herself into a position where other people owned her and used her.

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Back in the living room George picked up a large Chinese jade figurine. He snapped his fingers against it and a hollow sound resulted.

"Very nice."

She laughed uneasily. "It's nothing. I like collecting odd pieces of junk."

"I'd like to meet the junkman who sold you this. I'll bet he was dressed in morning suit and spats." He turned the figurine around in his hands. "Hmmm, this is almost big enough to keep a gun inside."

She looked away from him, her fingers now savagely fidgeting with the sash. George suddenly hated what he was doing to her.

He put the figurine on the table. His eye was drawn to a pocket novel with an envelope folded in its pages. He picked it up and read the title: "*The Curse of the Golden Corpse.*"

Her trembling increased as he started to remove the envelope.

"You'll lose my place!" she gasped.

"Don't be nervous." He unfolded the envelope. "3115 Stallings Boulevard. Who lives there?"

Julie had difficulty finding her voice. "Just—ah—just

my aunt. Yes, yes, my aunt—I mean she used to live there—she moved.”

“The letter is postmarked *three days ago.*” He glanced up. “You’re perspiring.”

The front door opened. A young man stopped short at the sight of a stranger in the room. The man was hard looking but handsome. Sharp features. Slick hair.

“What the hell’s going on?” he demanded.

Julie’s relief was obvious. “Tony, this man came in fifteen minutes ago. He’s been searching the apartment. He says—”

Before she could finish the man called Tony whipped out a gun. “Who are you? What do you want? Talk fast!!”

George spoke as though commenting on the weather. “Take one shot and inside of twenty-four hours the cops will find you in the North River.”

“Listen to him, Tony,” said the terrified girl. He’s telling the truth. He said he’s a friend of Rod’s, that Rod took orders from him.”

Tony lowered the gun. He studied George Wellington carefully, muttering to himself, “Six feet—pretty well built—a hundred seventy pounds—and just an average

looking guy—yeah, yeah, it could be—”

“Just like Rod always described him,” said Julie clinging to Tony’s arm.

“Yeah, but how can we be sure he isn’t a phony? What’s your name, mister?”

“You’ve never known my name, Tony. So how could it indicate whether or not I’m a phony?”

“Okay, okay, so you’re the Big Boy himself. What did you come here for?”

George smiled and looked at the envelope. “To find out where you live.”

Tony looked at the girl for some kind of sign but her face stayed frozen. “Thirty one fifteen—” he paused and swallowed hard, “Stallings Boulevard.”

“Thanks,” George moved toward the door. “Don’t leave town. I may have some business with you in the next couple of days.”

“My letter,” said Julie.

He tossed it on the table, “Give my regards to your aunt, Julie. I’ll be seeing you.”

After George left Julie stood staring at the door. She shivered. “He’s just like Rod always said.”

“Yeah.”

“Tony, what are we going to do . . . ?”

Tony had no answer.

When George reached the street the sick feeling hit him again. Why had he done it, he asked himself. Why! He had a mind of his own. Or did he? What he had done was contrary to his whole way of life. Or maybe it wasn’t! Was it really his philosophy that a man such as he should always turn the other cheek? Should allow another person to dominate his whole existence? Should never swerve from the agonizing nothingness of his life to stand up and speak his own mind?

George’s head throbbed with confusion. And through all of his misery came the sensation of having enjoyed what he had done. Then why did he feel so sick and terrified now, after carrying it off so well?

He was afraid! That was it, of course. He realized he had always been uncontrollably afraid. And yet, now that he had twice asserted himself, it had left him with this feeling of sheer fright inside.

As he walked down the avenue toward the bus stop a new problem overtook him. Could he go on like this? It was fine to be able at last to be a man. But wasn’t he going about it in the wrong

way? He couldn’t go on having self conversations with himself for the rest of his life! He would wind up in an institution for sure. If nobody else saw to that, Elvira would.

He bypassed the bus stop and walked four blocks to Forestview Avenue. He had known Robert Masters since they were both kids. He would take his troubles to him. Bob Masters was the best psychiatrist in the city.

He was less than a block from Masters’ office when—

Everything went off like clockwork, huh?

George hurried his steps, trying to get to the doctor’s before he found himself carrying out more orders. “I thought you were gone.”

We still have things to do. I take it you really fooled ‘em, huh?”

“What do you mean?”

They thought you were the Big Boy. I knew they would. Matter of fact you could pass for him. Well, we got them scared. Now we really get down to business.

“Don’t you want to know what I found out?”

Uh-uh. All I wanted was for you to make contact.

“I sure wish you had been with me. There were a couple of moments when I could

have used you. I was pretty worried."

I'm sorry about that, pal. But I can't stay with you as long as I'd like to.

"Just where the devil are you anyway?"

I don't know. Nowhere, I guess. Sometimes I see everything real clear like, know what I mean? Then everything gets foggy and I can't see anything.

"Are you a ghost?" gulped George.

Maybe I am. Maybe during the times everything gets foggy I'm out getting recharged or something.

"Are you really Rod Lundigan?"

Sure I am! Those two knocked me off and by God you're going to make them pay.

Doctor Masters' home was a pastel green two-storey stucco. George opened the gate and started up the walk.

Hey, where you going?

George stopped and took a deep breath. "I've been hearing you long enough. I'm going to have my head examined."

Now wait a minute! You mean you don't believe me? You don't think I'm the McCoy? I've put guys on ice for saying less than that. No

reason for you to be a privileged character, pal!

"I'm sorry but I don't think I'd better listen to you anymore."

Why, you dirty crumb, you can't do this to me!

"Try and stop me." George gritted his teeth and headed once again for the doctor's front door.

Maybe I can't stop you. But I'll bet twenty grand will.

It did. George Wellington turned slowly on his heels and gaped. "Did—did you say—"

Yeah, twenty thousand. Does that appeal to you?

It was a cool day but George wiped perspiration from his brow. "I don't know whether I'm mentally sick or not," he said, "but I'm listening!"

That's better! Now here's what we're going to do—

"After I talk to Bob Masters," George said firmly.

The voice did not reply but there was a sighing sound as though the mind were discouraged.

George laid back wearily on the psychiatrist's couch. He had been on his feet from the time he had left the house that morning. His limbs were not accustomed to such strenuous exercise.

Bob Masters looked quite

prosperous for having been practicing only five years. George congratulated him. The young doctor asked him to describe in detail the events of the past two days. George began with his Friday morning episode with Elvira and continued up to the present moment. He gave the story more detail and clarity than a psychiatrist expects at a first session.

"So this voice, this Rod Lundigan," George concluded, "first of all wants me to get the pair who killed him. And then I'm supposed to finish one other piece of business for him. He hasn't told me what it is yet." A worried frown covered his face. "Am I crazy?"

Bob Masters chewed lazily on an unlit pipe. "No, I don't think so. But you are an interesting case. Can you come back tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow's Sunday. Elvira will want me to . . ." he stopped, angry with himself for what he was about to say. "Yes! I'll be here tomorrow."

"Good. Let's make it the same time. In the meantime go home and get some rest. You're a tired man, George. You haven't been getting nearly enough rest."

"Thanks, Bob."

"Remember," said the doc-

tor, a sternness in his voice, "go right home. That's an order. It's very important."

"Okay—and thanks."

A block from Doctor Masters' house Rod Lundigan caught up with him.

Let's hop a streetcar. We're going to the races.

"Sorry. The Doc told me to go right home and get some rest." George was surprised at the way he was now taking Rod Lundigan for granted.

Are you still taking orders from people? When are you going to grow up, sonny boy?

George stopped walking. "What do you mean by that?"

I mean you had what it took last night and this morning. Now you're right back where you started. Letting other jerks run your show.

"But I have to see the doctor again tomorrow."

So do you have to let on you were with me at the races?

"This is crazy!" George put his hand to his forehead.

You want to make that twenty grand or don't you?

"I'd almost forgotten about that," George frowned. "I don't know how to play the races."

So much the better. That means you won't do any kibitzing. How much money you got with you?

"About ten dollars."

Ten dollars! We're not going to a nickelodeon. We're going where the big money is! Now how much loot you got with you?

"Ten dollars." George insisted. Rod's attitude annoyed him.

Okay, I guess we'll have to start out at the dime window. Come on, Rockefeller, let's cut out. Just don't stand there. Get moving.

The race track was teeming with spectators, gamblers and the usual shifty characters. George had never seen such utter confusion and excitement before. Almost immediately a tout had him by the lapel. But Rod Lundigan was close at hand to protect him.

Get away from that guy, George!

"Why?"

He's a tout! A crumb! A no-goodnick! Steer clear, understand?

"Yes, but he has a horse in the first race that's a cinch to win..."

The tout let go of George's lapel. "Who the hell are you talkin' to, chum?"

Come on. He's a small-time crook.

"What business is it of yours? I'll pick my own friends."

"Okay, okay, chum," said the mixed-up tout, "no offense. Be seein' you around." The tout walked away, his index fingers pointed outward making a rectangle in the air to indicate that George was fresh from squareville.

Go to the ten-dollar window and bet on Kid Manos to win.

"We aren't going to bet everything we have on the first race, are we?"

Will you do like I'm telling you? I know who'll win the goddam first race, so don't worry!

George wore a no-confidence frown on his face as he placed the bet.

Kid Manos came in and paid 25 to 1.

The voice instructed him to place his two hundred and sixty dollars on Stevens' Blockbuster in the third race.

"What about the second race?" George asked, puzzled.

Will you just keep your trap shut and do like I say?

"Okay, Rod, I just had a thought—"

Look, three days ago, just

before I got knocked off I fixed four of these races, so just sit tight, will you?

"That's cheating!"

It is like hell! Paying off jockeys cost me a small fortune. And I'm not even around to enjoy it!

Stevens' Blockbuster came in and paid 6 to 1.

George and the voice left the track with a grand total of twenty-one thousand, eight hundred and forty dollars....

George arrived promptly at two o'clock the following day in Doctor Masters' office.

"Before we get started," said George, "there's something I'd better tell you."

"You didn't follow my orders and go right home to rest yesterday," said the doctor.

"How did you know?"

"I didn't. But I was hoping you wouldn't follow those orders. Had you automatically done as I told you we might have had more serious problems on our hands. As it is I think we'll be able to clear up your trouble in one or two more visits. What happened after you left here yesterday?" The doctor assumed his position in a chair behind George's head.

"Well, the voice came back and we went to the race track

THE MAN WHO COULDN'T LOSE

—that is I went to the race track—I mean the voice told me—"

"Relax, George. It's perfectly all right to refer to yourself and this voice as 'we.' It makes matters simpler."

"So we went to the track and won twenty-one thousand dollars—"

"Twenty-one thousand—!" Doctor Masters cleared his throat and regained his composure. "Go on."

"Today, right after I leave here I'm going to take care of that unfinished business I was telling you about. I'm going to a poker game."

"Do you play poker?"

"No, but Rod—the voice—came to my room last night and taught me the fundamentals."

"I see." The doctor jotted down a note.

"One of the players in this game will be a big fat fellow they call the House. He has always been able to bluff Rod—the voice—when the chips are down. Now that Rod is dead he's pretty miserable about it. He wants me to go there and beat this man just once—so he can rest easier—or so he says."

"That's all you have to do?"

"He says it won't be easy. All the players are experts."

"Aren't you afraid it might be a little dangerous?"

George looked up over his head at the doctor. "Certainly not. I'm getting used to it."

Doctor Masters smiled. "How is Elvira, George?"

"I haven't seen my sister since she disappeared into her room yesterday morning . . ."

George stood in front of the modest looking apartment building, his coat collar turned up, his hands thrust in his pockets. He kept shifting from one foot to the other, occasionally dragging a hand out of his pocket to check the time.

Well, here I am, pal! You all ready?

"Where have you been?" George demanded. "I'm freezing."

Sorry, but since I don't know where the hell I am there isn't very much I can do sometimes to expedite where I'm going. Now listen. Do you have those descriptions all set in your mind?

"I think so."

You think so! You have to be sure! One slip with these monkeys upstairs and you're a dead pigeon.

"I've got it straight."

Okay. Now, one other thing. I'm not receiving you

as good as usual tonight. I have a feeling my days may be numbered. So let's move in and get it over with fast.

"Right."

George went into the building and took the self-service elevator to the eleventh floor. He pressed the buzzer at 1136 and kept his finger on it until a short mousy character in shirt-sleeves answered the door.

"Lookin' for a fire, chum?"

His larynx sounded as though it had been freshly sanded.

"Hello, Monty." George grinned at him.

The little guy was caught off guard. He took an unconscious step backward and George pushed on into the room.

His eyes stopped at a large round table with a green felt top. Three men were seated there. George could see the one they called the House sitting at the far end.

He took a deep breath and moved into the room with the confidence of a ringer in a sandlot ball game.

"Hello, Louis. Hi, Charlie."

"Who're you?" Louis growled.

George placed particular emphasis on his greeting to the fat man. "And how are

you today, House? You look a little pale."

The slob shouldn't look pale, the way he eats! Somebody ought to carve off some of that blubber and wipe his nose with it.

George paid no attention to the voice. The three had gone into action. Louis and Charlie drew automatics and covered him on either side while Monty stepped up in back and frisked him.

"He's clean," Monty said.

"Tell them to put away the iron, House," George ordered.

Louis shoved his gun into George's ribs. "Who the hell are you, mister? Come on, talk! I've got very nervous type fingers."

"The House will tell you who I am."

The fat man's frog eyes squinted, searching for something that would make him more certain.

George's eyes held steady. "For a man who's in line to follow Rod Lundigan as head of the protection racket you should have given that answer some more thought. Too bad." He started for the front door.

The fat man's neck rained perspiration. "Wait a minute!" George stopped. "Okay,

THE MAN WHO COULDN'T LOSE

boys, put away the artillery. It's him all right."

"It's who?" asked Charlie defiantly.

"The Big Boy himself, you numbskull!" growled the House. "Now do as I tell you."

The three mob members put away their guns.

"Sit down, Chief, sit down," the House said. "Maybe you'd like to join us, huh? Take your mind off business matters?"

"Sure, House," George smiled. "I don't mind turning a few with the boys. Nothing like getting to know the personnel better."

The four card players laughed and in a moment the House was dealing a game of five card stud. George worked into the game easily.

With the help of Rod Lundigan's voice George soon parlayed the twenty-one thousand he'd won on the horses into seventy thousand dollars. This failed to endear him to any of the card players but they were not inclined to argue.

When Monty began dealing a hand of five card draw Rod's voice gave George the word. *Okay, pal, this is going to be it! If you play your cards right you can walk out of here with a quarter of a million bucks. Now's your*

chance to square things for me.

George looked at his hand. Ten of spades, Jack of hearts, Deuce of hearts, Queen of diamonds and Queen of spades.

"Open," Louis mumbled, "for a grand."

"Raise." The House shoved two thousand into the pot.

"Raise *you!*" Charlie contributed four thousand.

George hesitated. "Call," he said, depositing his four thousand.

The rest of the players called. There was no further raising.

"Cards!" Monty barked.

"Three," said Louis.

The House said, "Give me the lid."

"Same for me," Charlie said.

George looked around at the other four players. His eyes stopped at the House. The big man's face was set in granite. Not a muscle moved. "Give me three."

"Right you are, Chief," Monty served him three cards, "and the dealer is *also* honest."

George picked up his cards: Deuce of clubs, Seven of hearts and Queen of clubs. The triplets looked powerful.

"Opener checks," Louis mumbled.

House pawed at a stack of chips. "Five grand."

"Call you and raise five," said Charlie.

"And I'll raise you five thousand, Charlie." George was nervous but he knew that to show it might prove fatal.

Louis tossed his hand on the table. "I'm dead. Kings opened."

"I'm with you, chum," Monty's cards hit the table.

"Right back at you, Chief," said the House. "I'll double the bet. Make it thirty thousand."

Charlie called.

George stalled, waiting for some advice from Rod but none came. He cleared his throat. "Let's make it forty thousand."

Louis and Monty sat up and took an intense interest in the proceedings.

"I don't know, Chief. I got a pretty smooth hand here. Say we push it up to sixty?" The House took another quick look at his cards.

George swallowed hard. What had happened to Rod?

"Make it seventy thousand," came the unexpected announcement from Charlie.

The House glared at him. "Oh, sandbagging, huh? What a sneaky bastard you are!"

"All in a day's play," Charlie beamed.

"I'll drop," said George with a sigh.

"And I'll just up you ten thousand more," the fat man growled at Charlie.

"Okay, House," shrugged Charlie, "you're called but you better be loaded."

The fat man proudly displayed his hand. "Three Jacks, Charlie."

Charlie dropped his cards with a snarl. And George felt the frustration that had followed Rod beyond the grave; the bitterness of folding to an inferior hand. Charlie had missed and tried to bluff it through. The House was just too good. Wherever he was, Rod would have to carry that bitter knowledge through eternity. But George could now see what that would mean to a gambler. He knew also, why Rod had remained silent during the hand. This one had to be on the level or Rod would have gained nothing. The House had to be beaten man to man.

Tony Borelli sat staring down the barrel of the .45 automatic George had purchased after he left the card game.

"Look, mister, I'll do anything you ask—but I'd be a sucker to sign a confession—"

"You killed Rod Lundigan

on your own. You did it because you wanted Julie. That wasn't very smart, Tony. You've even worried a few other people. So in order to make sure you don't dream up any more fancy plans we want you to sign a little note. That way you'll be protected and we'll be protected." George smiled. "Understand?"

Julie put her arms around Tony's shoulder. "I think they mean business, honey. Maybe you better do what he says."

George was getting impatient. He wanted to get it over with and get out. "I'll give you thirty seconds, Tony."

Tony jumped out of the chair and went to Julie's desk. He was barely able to hold the pen steady as he scrawled a one page confession. George snatched up the paper and read it.

"Thanks, Tony," he chuckled...

In the lobby of the apartment house George asked the pretty switchboard operator for an envelope.

He stuffed the confession inside the envelope, sealed it and addressed it to the Police Department. He winked playfully at the switchboard operator as he deposited

Tony Borelli's death warrant in the apartment house mailbox. . . .

Doctor Masters finished his notes behind his desk and glanced over at George lying peacefully on the couch.

"Well, George," the doctor shoved his chair away and rose, "I don't think you'll have to come back again. Professionally, that is. But I hope you'll pay me a social call from time to time." He paused, "George?" He walked over to the couch. There was a faint snoring sound.

Masters shook George by the shoulders. "George, I haven't been boring you, have I?"

"Huh?" George came to and blinked several times. "Oh, no, no! I must have dozed off," he chuckled.

Doctor Masters laughed. "Well, it shows you're no longer even concerned. Maybe that's the best possible sign."

"You mean there's nothing wrong with me?"

"Not anymore."

"But you didn't give me any advice or—I mean you haven't even talked about what *was* wrong with me."

Masters pulled a chair around and faced his patient. "George, you've lived your

whole life in a shadow. You've been nothing more than a shell of a man. Subconsciously you've always yearned to be able to assert yourself, make your own decisions, live your own life. After twelve years of allowing Elvira and a lot of other people to push you around you became fed up. You decided to do something about it."

George was puzzled. "No, I didn't."

"Yes, you did, George. Whether you're aware of it or not Rod Lundigan was your own creation. His voice was in your mind and *only* in your mind. An hallucination brought about as a result—"

"Hallucination!"

The doctor grinned. "Calm yourself, old boy. It isn't as bad as it sounds. People have them every day. Very ordinary people, too. You're an ordinary person, George. And your hallucination performed a valuable service for you. It enabled you for the first time in your life to assert yourself, to transform daydreams into actions, to lift your ego to the surface where it belongs. You and you alone did this. As a result you're a much healthier man today than you were last Friday."

"You mean I just imagined the voice and because of that my whole life has changed?"

"Don't you think it's changed for the better?"

George nodded. "Yes, yes, I think it has. In fact I'm sure of it!"

"Then go on home. You have a lot to look forward to, George. Like all new discoveries I have a feeling your life is going to be most interesting from now on."

George got up from the couch. He stretched his arms and felt good.

He descended the front steps two at a time. He raised

his hand and a taxi screeched to a halt. "Three-Twenty East Elm!"

Well, pal, we certainly put one over on that psychiatrist jerk, didn't we!

George went pale. With great trepidation he leaned over and said, "I beg your pardon, driver?"

The cabbie threw him a look of disdain. "I didn't say nuthin', Mac."

George settled back with a sigh as Rod chuckled.

And now—about that damn poker game. We got to get another stake together. I'll tell you what we're gonna do—

THE END



"I'd thought I'd be safe 10,000 feet up in the air. Then, this wise guy turned on the automatic pilot!"

Lockridge discovered the wonderful powers of psi. They seemed limitless. He could read minds, predict the future, stand on thin air, travel miles in an instant. There was only one answer to all this. He could have—

Anything His Heart Desires

By ROBERT SILVERBERG

"JUST a minute," Howard Lockridge called, as he put down the book he was reading. "I'm coming."

A moment later, the vice-provost of MacFlecknoe College approached the door of Lockridge's apartment. The doorbell rang.

Lockridge opened the door and let the other in. "Good of you to drop over," he said. "It's nice to see a sympathetic face again, Lionel."

The vice-provost shook the snow from his shoes, coughed, and stared curiously at Lockridge. After a pause he said, "Officially, Howard, I'm here wearing an *unsympathetic* face, and keep that in mind. If old Denson ever learned I had come here on a social visit—"

"One of these days," Lock-

ridge said, "I'm going to put a hex on Denson that'll turn his blood to applesauce, and then *you'll* be running this college. If I were you, I'd stay on my good side, Lionel."

Lockridge returned to the small, cozily-decorated living room that was the central focus of his three-room faculty apartment and turned on the hi-fi set. High-fidelity was Howard Lockridge's main hobby; the set, an expensive one, had been put together by one of the college's electronics instructors, and Lockridge, who taught English, was proud to boast that he had not the slightest knowledge of the phonograph's inner workings.

He took a record from the cabinet and put it on. "Bar-tok's Fifth Quartet," he



The powers of psi multiplied in ever-expanding sequence.

explained. "It's good unsettling music to hold a serious discussion by."

After a few moments of uneasy silence, the vice-provost remarked, "That was part of it, wasn't it?"

"What was?"

"Coming to the door that way—before I rang. Is that one of your new powers?"

Lockridge nodded. "That's just about the *only* one, so far," he said. "I'm afraid this whole thing has become greatly exaggerated since I made that announcement at the faculty meeting Tuesday. Tell me," he said, leaning forward, "just what sort of an impression did I make? Be frank, Lionel."

The vice-provost looked unhappy. "Frankly, Howard, you startled us. MacFlecknoe College may never recover from the effect. Picture it: after half an hour of dull debating on exam procedures, one of the younger English profs gets up and announces he's learned how to read minds! Naturally it caused a fuss."

"You people just weren't paying attention—as usual!" Lockridge said angrily. He got up and began to pace. "I never said anything about reading minds. What I said—

or at least I *think* I said it—was that I had succeeded in enhancing the normal psi-potential of the human brain."

"Doesn't that mean reading minds?"

"It could," admitted Lockridge. "But psi covers all kinds of extra-sensory manifestations—telepathy, psychokinesis, levitation, and so on. In my case, it's limited so far to just two abilities: precognition when someone's at my door, and card-reading."

"Can you prove this?" the vice-provost asked.

"Probably not to Denson's satisfaction. He's dead set on throwing me out, isn't he? I don't suppose he'll even give me a chance to try to clear myself."

"It doesn't look likely. Listen to this note I got from him just before coming over." He unfolded a crumpled piece of stationery. "'Dear Professor Cordman'—that's a tip, by the way. He calls me 'Dear Lionel' except when he's hopping mad. 'Dear Professor Cordman: In view of Dr. Lockridge's actions at yesterday's faculty meeting, would you kindly see to it that word gets around that Dr. Lockridge is to be indefinitely suspended from his academic duties? This means, of course, that he is to have no contact

whatsoever with members of the student body.'"

Lockridge frowned. "I guess he means it," he said.

"I guess he does," said Cordman. "But listen, Howard. I'm on your side, even if no one else is. Don't leave MacFlecknoe. I'm almost certain I can get you reinstated. The students are up in arms about the affair now, and they may make it rough for Denson."

Lockridge ran nervous fingers through his graying crew-cut. "What do I have to do to get back in his majesty's good graces? Deny everything?"

"It would help," Cordman suggested.

"I figured you'd say that. But I can't do it—not now, when my research has finally borne fruit."

"Hmm." Cordman beat time to the music for a moment, and then said, casually, "Suppose you give me a demonstration. This card business, I mean. I'm anxious to see it work."

Lockridge smiled. "I'm glad you asked me. I don't dare suggest things to people any more, not after Tuesday." He reached into his pocket and took out a thin bundle of worn playing-

cards. He handed them to Cordman.

"Here, Lionel. Examine them. They're called Rhine-Zener cards, named after the first experimenters in psi. There are twenty-five of them all together, in five suits of five each—stars, rectangles, wavy lines, circles, and crosses. The way we use them is to place them face down, like this, and try to guess or perceive the symbol on the other side. An average person usually guesses five or six right each time he tries."

"And you?"

Lockridge consulted a little notebook. "The last hundred-sixty-two times I've been through the deck, I've hit twenty-five out of twenty-five. Want a demonstration?"

The vice-provost nodded uneasily. "Go ahead. Show me."

"Shuffle the cards," Lockridge said. Cordman shuffled.

"Put them down here. Now, as I call off a symbol, pick up the card and tell me if I'm right."

"I've got it," said Cordman.

Lockridge took a deep breath, stared at the cards for a moment, and said, "Circle."

Cordman gingerly lifted

the first card. "That's—right."

"Waves."

"Right."

"Another circle."

"Right."

"Cross."

Cordman nodded. "Right. This is—it's *uncanny*, Howard."

Lockridge smiled impassively. "Don't interrupt the run. Let's go through the entire deck." He stared at the next card.

"Cross," he said.

Twenty cards later, Cordman sat back and shook his head. "I don't believe it, Howard. Twenty-five out of twenty-five! It's an amazing power."

"It's just the beginning," Lockridge said. His eyes were flaming with enthusiasm. "Now that I've demonstrated the existence of the psi powers, I'm going to get to work on my new project."

"Which is?"

"First, to help others to kindle their potential extra-sensory powers, and second, to develop my own even further. The reach of the mind is simply extraordinary, Lionel! Someday, perhaps, if I'm allowed to continue my research, man will be able to fly as easily as he walks to-

day, be able to transmit himself instantaneously from place to place! All I need is some help—a grant from the Trustees, perhaps, and a semester's leave with pay. That's what I was going to request when Denson got so upset and dissolved the meeting. Who can tell what heights I'll be able to reach—right here at MacFlecknoe!"

"It sounds wonderful, Howard."

"Then you'll help me? You'll intercede with Denson for me?"

Cordman shook his head sadly. "Unfortunately, no. I can't risk it. Denson is so firmly convinced you're crazy that he won't listen to reason; he's determined to get you put away before you tarnish MacFlecknoe's fair name or something. And I'm afraid I can't risk my own position in the college by taking your side, Howard. I'm sorry to have to fail you like this."

"I know how it is, Lionel," Lockridge said, putting his hand on the older man's shoulder. "I shouldn't have asked you to jeopardize your—"

He paused. "Just a minute. Someone's at the door."

Cordman was puzzled. "But I didn't hear—"

The sound of the doorbell rang out over the droning of the phonograph. Cordman smiled weakly. "Oh, I see. I forgot about your pow—" Then, suddenly, he became panicky. As Lockridge rose to answer the door, the vice-provost grasped his arm desperately.

"Wait, Howard! That may be Denson—he *mustn't* find me here! Let me get out the back way before you open the door."

"There isn't any back way," Lockridge said.

"The window, then?" Cordman was feverish with anxiety. "He *mustn't* find me with you, Howard!"

Lockridge smiled. "It's a twenty-foot drop to the ground," he said. "So I'm afraid you're stuck here. But it's nothing to worry about, though. It's only the president of the Student Board out there." He turned. "I'm coming," he said, a fraction of a second before the bell rang a second time.

The president of the Student Board was a shapely coded named Carol Gray, a lively brunette who seemed to be active in every MacFlecknoe activity from the lone campus sorority to the cheering squad. Lockridge first had

encountered her when she was a freshman in his Required English Composition A1-A2 course.

She had developed a crush on Lockridge which had posed a serious problem for a while, but by dint of careful coolness he had managed to dampen her ardor, and she was now, in her senior year, happily pinned to a star half-back.

"Come on in, Carol," Lockridge said. "What brings you to this forbidden territory?"

"I've heard the news, Dr. Lockridge, and I'm here on behalf of Student Board to find out—oh, there's Professor Cordman! I thought you knew about President Denson's new instruction that no faculty members were to visit Dr. Lockridge during his suspension."

Cordman coughed and red-dened. Lockridge hastily said, "Dr. Cordman was merely performing his official duties by informing me of that unpleasant fact."

"Harrumph! That's exactly right," Cordman said stiffly. "And now, if you please, Lockridge, I'll have to go. My coat, please?" He marched out.

When Cordman was gone, Lockridge turned to Carol.

"All right, what's up? They tell me that I'm off-bounds for students too, or didn't you know that?"

Carol smiled, revealing a row of exceptionally white teeth. "Oh, I knew that well enough, Dr. Lockridge. But you don't think we always listen to what Denson—I mean President Denson—commands, do you? We do have minds of our own."

Lockridge said nothing.

A little flustered, she continued anyway. "The Student Board met a little while ago and decided to send me over to investigate the complaint against you. We don't think it's *right* to treat you like a leper before anyone knows whether you're telling the truth or not," she said sympathetically.

"I appreciate that, Carol. It's been a very hard two days for me, and it's good to see that someone's on my side." *Even if it's only the Student Body*, he added silently.

She nodded. "I've heard the whole story," she said. "About your—powers." She looked soulfully into his eyes, and Lockridge winced a little until he recalled she was wearing the halfback's pin. "Is it true, Dr. Lockridge? Do you really have extra-sen-

sory perception, or whatever they said?"

He smiled and reached for the deck of cards.

Ten minutes later, she was speechless for, perhaps, the first time in nineteen years.

After gazing at him in awe for nearly a full minute, she said, "I'd like to make a phone call, Dr. Lockridge."

He gestured toward the alcove where the telephone was. "Go ahead, Carol."

He listened as she dialed and spoke. "Hello, Iggy?" she said. "Carol. I'm here at Lockridge's. . . . Yeah, that's right. I'm still alive and in one piece. . . . All right, all right, no remarks! . . . He's on the square, Iggy. Either that or he's the biggest card-sharp since . . . Invite him? But you know what Denson . . . ? All right, if you say so. Be over in a couple of secs." She hung up, came back, and faced Lockridge triumphantly.

"That was the head of the Cheering Squad," she said. "He extends an invitation to you to deliver the half-time pep talk to the assembled multitudes when we play State on Saturday. How about?"

Lockridge shook his head. "But I don't know anything

about football," he protested. "And besides, President Denson has ordered me to stay away from all student activities. Sorry, but I can't accept. I'm honored by the invitation."

She was adamant. "I won't take no for an answer, Dr. Lockridge. You're not afraid of Denson, are you? He can't do anything to you in public. We'd riot!"

"I'm afraid I—"

She looked at him archly. "Dr. Lockridge?" she said.

"Yes, Carol?"

"Would you do it—just for me? We're counting on having you, you know."

"I'll think it over," he said, handing her her coat.

After she left, Lockridge gave his first attention to the phonograph, taking off the Bartok and putting on a Mozart adagio to calm himself down. He had noticed, for the past few minutes, an anger mounting in him.

At any other college, he thought, his researches would have brought him lasting fame. Dr. Rhine, down at Duke, was world-renowned. While here, at MacFlecknoe, old Denson was so concerned with avoiding scandal that he had bottled Lockridge up completely. It hurt. The frus-

tration of being ordered to his room and kept from contact with other mortals was something Lockridge hadn't experienced since his childhood, and that had been a long time ago. He resented it, bitterly. Suddenly he felt a burning desire to cross the Quad and beard Denson in his lair, as it were. He could see the plump little college president now, and Lockridge's soul swelled with burning hatred.

If I could get hold of Denson now, I'd—

Lockridge gasped and tried to catch on to the desk, but it was too late. He felt a weird swirling sensation, and, before he could react to it, it was succeeded by a feeling of coldness, as if he had abruptly been transported out into the wintry November air.

And then he was indoors again. When he opened his eyes, he saw an astonished President Denson.

"*Lockridge!*" Denson snapped. "How dare you come into my study unannounced? What are you doing here? I gave you strict orders to remain in seclusion until the trustees could consider your case."

Lockridge ignored him. "Teleportation!" he said ex-

ultantly. "There! Another power! It's starting to build up, now, Denson. That's the third power."

"What are you talking about, you madman?"

Lockridge regarded the president scornfully. "Don't call me a madman, you narrow-minded old fool." Stifling Denson's outraged gasp, Lockridge went on. "That makes three powers—no, four. I can read the Rhine Cards, I can tell when someone's outside my door, I know who's out there, and I can teleport! Each time, in reaction to some crisis or severe emotional state, I've developed some new power."

He turned menacingly on the cowering president. "And you're the one who's blocking me! You, you petty little academician, you piously say no such things can exist while I proceed to unveil all the mysteries of the mind. You stand in my way! You cut off my funds, suspend me, order my colleagues and students to keep away! Why, I could whisk you off to Mars in an instant if I—"

Suddenly, aghast at himself, Lockridge stopped and gulped. For the moment, he hadn't doubted he *could* teleport Denson to Mars if he

tried hard enough, but now it occurred to him that it would probably mean murder.

Even though there'd be no *corpus delicti*, he didn't hate Denson that much. He backed away.

Denson recovered the use of his voice first. Now it was his turn to menace. "You raving lunatic," he said, calmly, in a half-whisper. "I hired you against all my best judgment, but there's no doubt in my mind about what to do with you now. When the trustees meet on Monday, I'll recommend not only that you be disaffiliated from MacFlecknoe College immediately, but that you be committed to a mental institution!"

Denson stepped boldly forward, and Lockridge retreated. "You're not fit to remain in what once was a sane and respectable small college, Lockridge. I hope you haven't already hopelessly destroyed our reputation. I know I shouldn't have hired an outsider, a Harvard man! Only a MacFlecknoe man can fully understand the MacFlecknoe tradition."

He stood on tiptoes to glare directly into Lockridge's eyes. "Get back to your apartment," he ordered. "And stay there! I'll give orders to the

campus police to seize you and put you away if you're seen anywhere in the open. Understand?"

"Yes, sir," Lockridge said weakly, and backed out.

He crossed the quad on foot this time; he didn't dare trust to teleportation a second time. He marched dejectedly through the snow, ignoring the boisterous students having a snowball fight down at the far end of the quad, near the fraternity house.

As Lockridge started up the steps of the faculty residence hall, one of the students detached himself from the group and trotted over.

It was Rick Jansen, Carol's halfback. He ran up the steps and hailed Lockridge.

Lockridge paused. "What is it, Rick?" he asked wearily.

"I just saw Carol, and she said you don't want to speak at the half-time rally Saturday. This true?"

Lockridge nodded. "Maybe you haven't heard—"

"She told me the whole story," Jansen said. "About the cards, and all." His smile dropped for an instant. "I don't know whether to believe it or not, yet, but I want to tell you, sir, that on behalf of the football team I want to repeat the request Carol

made. We'd be honored to have you come, sir."

He started to tell the halfback about Denson's threats, about how he'd be picked up by the campus police if seen in any part of the MacFlecknoe campus, and then he thought, *Why not?* Why not make one last gesture on behalf of MacFlecknoe? I'll be ridden out of here on a rail anyway Monday, as soon as the trustees meet. Might as well make it a grand exit.

"All right," he said. "You can tell her I accept. I'll speak at half-time."

"Great, sir!" Jansen said enthusiastically. "It'll really be—"

"Hey, Jansen!" someone called. "Here's a completed pass for you!" It was Hal Kelly, a star pitcher for MacFlecknoe's otherwise undistinguished baseball varsity. He was holding a compact-looking snowball in his dead-left hand. He went into a windup.

"Better duck, sir!" Jansen said hurriedly. "If he's wild and hits you it's going to hurt."

"Don't worry, Rick," Lockridge said casually, feeling a new power come over him. He reached out with his mind and coolly batted the snowball back. It thudded into the

amazed southpaw's stomach, and he sat down hard.

"That's just a sample, Rick," Lockridge said. "You can tell Denson about that one." He turned and went inside.

He took out his notebook and carefully recorded all the phenomena he had experienced during the day, starting with the precognition as vice-provost Cordman had approached the door, and finishing with the telekinesis of the snowball. It was quite a record for one day.

Lockridge began to feel a kind of radiant self-confidence that he had never known before—until he remembered that he was all washed up, that his academic career was over. Gloomily he realized that he now qualified as a full-scale Crackpot; he'd be forced to find a private backer to support further experiments in psi, and that meant enduring laughter, abuse, newspaper stories, and all the other torments anyone of unusual ability is inevitably required to endure.

Then he brightened. He'd met each crisis so far, and responded with an extension of his powers. The original problem was to prove to himself that extra-sensory pow-

ers existed at all. He'd been a confirmed skeptic until beginning his researches. The further he had delved into the reaches of the mind, the more fascinated he had become—and the more skeptical. Until the day when there had been the unheard "*click!*" in his mind, and he knew he had crossed the first barrier.

He had hit twenty-five out of twenty-five on the Rhine-Zener tests. First once, then twice in a day's experimenting. And then he had begun to hit full score all the time.

That had been the beginning. The other powers had followed, one by one. He smiled. *I'll get there yet*, he resolved. I've had some ace in the hole every time, and when they throw me out on Monday I'll—

Then he remembered that he'd probably get thrown out on Saturday, when he spoke at the football game. He shrugged his shoulders. *I'll manage*, he thought.

He turned on the phonograph and put on the Charpentier *Marche de Triomphe*. He was confident, but he wanted a little musical reassurance.

The day of the game was perfect for football. The weather was cold, crisp, and clear, with an irony-gray,

cloudless sky and a light but brisk wind blowing in from the north. That was a surprise in itself, Lockridge reflected; football Saturdays were invariably rainy or slushy or nasty in some other way. He had attended just two football games in his four years at MacFlecknoe; he hadn't enjoyed them, and when he realized that the 99.78% turnout at each game left him the opportunity to stroll the campus in complete solitude or use the library undisturbed, he ceased going to games forthwith and relished the privacy each Saturday afforded.

This Saturday, though, he was awakened earlier than usual. He sensed many figures outside his door, and he had his robe half on before the doorbell rang.

Still more than a little asleep, he opened the door. "What's going on?"

The smiling, well-scrubbed face of Rick Jansen greeted him. "It's us, Dr. Lockridge. Today's the day of the game."

"So?"

"I guess you haven't heard. Denson seems to have found out you're going to be there, and he's planning to post guards outside your apartment as soon as the sun's up.

So we came to get you now. We'll keep you in the clubhouse until half-time; by then it'll be too late for Denson to do anything. He can't very well arrest you in front of everybody."

"You don't know Denson," Lockridge said. "But I'll go through with it. Let me get dressed and find a book, and I'll be with you in a couple of minutes."

He shaved and dressed hastily, grabbed up the first book he could find, Rousseau's *Confessions*, and delivered himself into their hands. There were five or six of them, he saw now, all members of the football team. They bundled him speedily out to an old jalopy of uncertain mobility.

The two-mile drive to the MacFlecknoe Bowl was a harrowing one, but in due time they approached the miniature stadium and piled out of the car.

Lockridge, completely at a loss for direction, started walking, but Rick Jansen whistled him back. "It's this way, Dr. Lockridge."

They led him to the clubhouse. The sun was just starting to rise as he went inside.

"Just take one of the rub-

bing tables, Dr. Lockridge. They're very comfortable for reading. We'll bring you your breakfast as soon as they get back with it."

Ten minutes later, some toast and coffee arrived. Lockridge grunted his thanks, settled down with his Rousseau, and waited. He read patiently all morning. About noon, the athletes returned, bringing lunch, and while Lockridge ate they donned their uniforms. Lockridge watched, amazed, at the layer after layer of padding required. Football, he decided, was a rougher sport than he had thought. He found himself profoundly thankful he had concentrated on Chaucer and Donne in college instead.

"The game starts at 1:30," Jansen said. "The first half ought to be over by three or so, if those guys from State stall the way they usually do. Then it'll be your turn to speak."

"Anything special I'm supposed to say?"

"Just usual pep stuff; you know."

Lockridge nodded. "I'll do my best. Just keep Denson and his trained bruisers away from me."

"We'll try, sir," Jansen promised.

When the game started, Lockridge was led out bundled in a blanket and smuggled onto the MacFlecknoe bench, where he sat, head down, trying to look inconspicuous.

He watched the first half with a minimum of comprehension. It seemed as if the State players were all about seven feet tall, and it seemed too as if the MacFlecknoe varsity weren't very good. State took the ball seventy-two yards for a touchdown on the first play from scrimmage, and though MacFlecknoe managed to hold them to a fifty-six yard TD on the next play, it wasn't much of an improvement.

Then, oddly enough, things tightened up. State still continued to batter MacFlecknoe mercilessly, but they never managed to get within ten yards of paydirt again. And, when, twenty seconds from the end of the half, Jansen kicked a field goal, narrowing the margin to 14-3, the roar from the highly partisan MacFlecknoe crowd was deafening.

As the varsity eleven came jogging back to the bench at the end of the half, Jansen paused for a moment to talk to Lockridge.

"We've done our stuff,"

Jansen said. "Now it's your turn. Carol's going to introduce you."

Then he trotted into the dressing-room to freshen up for the second half. Lockridge, uneasy, turned to call him, but was interrupted by a monstrous fanfare and drumroll from the band.

Then Carol Gray stepped up to the microphone near the scoreboard, about twenty feet away.

"Loyal sons of Red-and-Green!" she said loudly. "As you know, it's an old MacFlecknoe custom to have a faculty member address us during halves of the annual game with State. You all remember the fiery, inspirational talk Dr. Logan of—the Latin department gave last year."

Chuckles ran through the crowd.

"This year, however—this year, we have with us one of the best-loved members of the wonderful MacFlecknoe faculty: a man you all know, whose course you've all taken, whose charming personality and dashing appearance have made him tops in popularity on campus."

Lockridge reddened; apparently Carol hadn't fully outgrown that freshman crush yet.

"You all know who he is. He is a man whose new experiments will, I'm sure, bring fame and glory to MacFlecknoe. I give you—that incredible superman—Dr. Howard Lockridge!"

The stands were up and roaring. As someone pushed Lockridge toward the microphone, he was almost deafened by the joyous outcry that burst from a thousand loyal throats. They were screaming his name, over and over again.

He grasped the microphone with both hands as if it were a writhing serpent and cleared his throat. The sound boomed back at him from the giant amplifier above.

"Colleagues and students," he began, in a small, timid voice. Cries of "Louder!" reverberated from the students in the stands.

"*Colleagues and students!*" he bellowed. "This is the first—I blush to admit it—the first time I have seen our school face State on the gridiron. Football is a noble game, and I regret having overlooked it so long. I hope our team will march on to victory today, because—because this will be the last time I will ever—"

A low murmur started up

in the stands. Puzzled, Lockridge paused to see what was causing it. The sound grew to an angry snarl. Then he sensed clearly what was happening. He didn't need to look.

Five members of the blue-coated campus police, led by President Denson, were sneaking up behind him.

"Watch out!" someone called from the stands, but the warning was unnecessary. Lockridge had already whirled to face them.

"I told you," Denson said, approaching. "I told you I'd put you away if you did anything like this, and I'm going to. Grab him, boys!"

The policemen circled around him. Lockridge fended them off with the microphone, but they drew in closer, while the outraged shouts from the stands became positively tumultuous. Finally one of the police reached out and grabbed the microphone from Lockridge's cold, numb hands.

"Now you've got him!" Denson called exultantly.

"No we don't!" one of the policemen said.

The stadium suddenly became terribly silent.

Lockridge stared. The policemen were backing away from him, white-faced. He

looked down in sudden inspiration.

He was two feet off the ground, and still rising.

Levitation! He smiled broadly. Good old psi; his powers never failed him when they were needed! Limitless vistas opened before his eyes as he floated higher and higher.

He saw the pale, stricken face of Denson watching him from below. And now the shocked silence was broken. The crowd was cheering, calling his name, wildly applauding.

He rose even higher. He was now about fifteen feet off the ground, and drifting toward the center of the stadium. He was hovering just above the fifty-yard line.

Lockridge held up his hand for silence, and began to speak. His voice was like a trumpet; he was plainly audible throughout the Bowl.

"As I was saying," he began, "this will probably be the last chance I have to see a MacFlecknoe football game."

He rose a bit higher. Looking down, he estimated he was almost thirty feet in the air.

"You probably can understand why," he said. "But I

want my last game to be a good one!" He looked down. *Fifty feet.* He started to feel alarmed.

"We're only eleven points behind," he said. He made a hasty mental computation. "Ah—two touchdowns, I believe, will fix that." *Sixty-five feet?* "Go out there, MacFlecknoe," he exhorted passionately. "Go out there and wipe up the field with them!"

The student body rose as one man to acclaim him, and the ground got further away. Denson, frozen in midfield, was just a dot now, and Lockridge kept going, higher and higher.

In a moment, the stadium was a doughnut beneath him.

Four days later, a weary and footsore Lockridge quietly entered the MacFlecknoe quad. He heard running steps behind him, and looked around to see vice-provost Cordman coming to meet him.

"Hello, Lionel," he said tiredly. "I'm back to pick up my stuff. I've been walking for the last three days—didn't dare trust any of my powers after that fiasco. I wound up in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, when I finally came down."

"It's good to see you again," Cordman said warmly. "We've all been so worried

about you since you—floated away."

"I'll bet. It's a pity I couldn't see the expression on Denson's face when I vanished."

Cordman's face darkened. "Oh—Denson. Very sad case. Apoplectic fit. He's in bad shape; they don't think he'll live."

Cordman smiled. "But the trustees met yesterday and removed him, you know. They've elected *me* president of MacFlecknoe," he said proudly.

Suddenly Lockridge felt the familiar sensation of power entering his mind, and his eyes widened.

"Congratulations," Lockridge said.

"That's not all the good news I have," Cordman beamed. *Should I tell him about his fellowship now or later?* he thought.

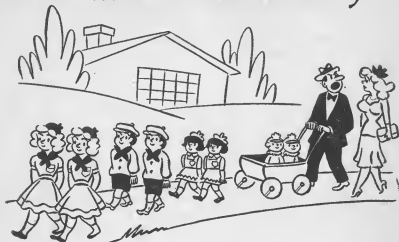
Lockridge picked up the thought clearly. "Go ahead," he urged. "Tell me about my fellowship now, not later," he said.

"Well, you've been given a grant to do research in psi and—" Cordman paled. "Good Lord, do you read minds now too?"

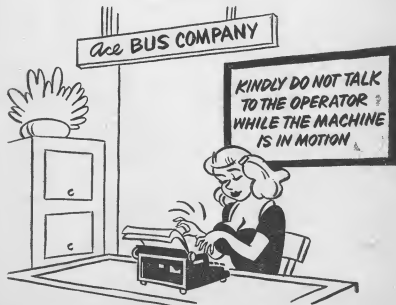
"That's only the beginning," Lockridge smiled.

THE END

Dream World's Cartoon Gallery



"Let's try twin beds."



"Oops—sorry, Fred, I didn't realize you were in here."



"If he's not at Grace Jones', try Sally Brown's or Betty Gray's."



"The elderly lady you were helping across the street is much better."



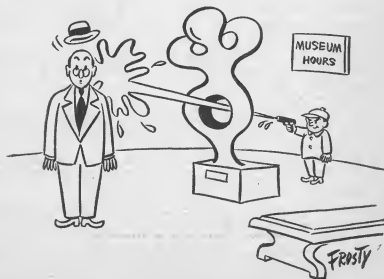
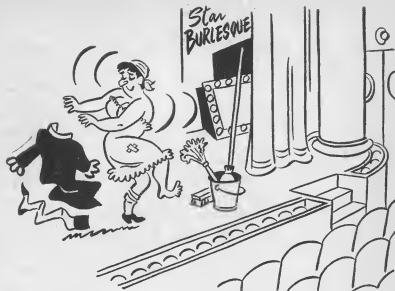
"For goodness' sake, when are you going to start acting like a husband!"



"On second thought, let's put out the fire."



"He never forgot that I was the one who bagged him."



GUIDED TOUR THROUGH DREAMLAND

From the Bible to the post-Freudian novelist, men have been intrigued by the meanings of dreams. Whether for atmosphere or symbolic and religious significance, fictional heroes are as haunted by dreams as ordinary people. Our quiz describes some of the most famous dreams in world literature. Take a pencil and check the correct answers to each question. If you're a good literary detective, your batting average should be 15 out of 20.

1. The heroine has recurring nightmares in which she is lost in a fog.
Gone With the Wind—Wuthering Heights
2. The wife of the hero dreams that her husband is being murdered. Despite her warnings he goes to work that day and is killed.
Julius Caesar—Macbeth
3. The heroine dreams that the villain carries her off and becomes involved in a fight with her sweetheart.
Oklahoma—Carousel
4. While lying wounded the hero dreams about the sorrow of the girl he has repudiated.
War and Peace—Anna Karenina
5. The heroine dreams that the hero is dying, calling to her with his last breath.
Sleeping Beauty—Beauty and the Beast
6. An old miser dreams of his past and present sins and his terrible destiny.
Cricket on the Hearth—A Christmas Carol
7. The night before her wedding, a young girl dreams she is carrying a child along a lonely road and comes to her fiance's house, now in ruins.
Jane Eyre—Wuthering Heights
8. Some residents of Athens have strange adventures in a forest when they become involved in the world of fairies. But they are put to sleep at dawn and when they awoke, think it was all a dream.
Much Ado About Nothing—A Midsummer Night's Dream
9. A little girl becomes involved in a dream world populated by animated chessmen and other strange creatures.
Through the Looking Glass—Alice in Wonderland
10. A king dreams of seven fat eels of corn eaten by seven lean eels and seven fat cattle devoured by seven lean.
The Old Testament—The New Testament

11. A sailor kills an oibotross. He then falls into a dream and hears the spirits talking of his long penance.
Rime of the Ancient Mariner—Wreck of the Hesperus
12. A poor student finds in a dream his justification for killing a money-lender whom he detests. *The Possessed—Crime and Punishment*
13. Having lost his chance of fortune, the hero falls into a delirium, in which he dreams of the fiery death of an old woman he is unable to save. *Bleak House—Great Expectations*
14. A sleepwalking lady dreams that her hands are stained with blood that will not wash off. *Macbeth—King Lear*
15. An average man becomes, in his daydreams, a series of valiant heroes. *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty—My Life and Hard Times*
16. A dope addict tells of seeing Our Lady of Sorrows in his dreams. *The Man With the Golden Arm—Confessions of an Opium-Eater*
17. A little boy's stuffed animals come alive in his dreams. *Mary Poppins—Winnie the Pooh*
18. A Negro slave dreams of being ridden by a witch. *The Luck of Roaring Camp—The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
19. Two children go on a dream search for happiness accompanied by their pets. *Peter Pan—The Blue Bird*
20. A boy is afraid to go out after dark because a murderous half-breed haunts his dreams. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer—The Virginian*

ANSWERS

1. *Gone With the Wind*—Scarlett O'Hara is the dreamer. 2. *Julius Caesar*—Calpurnia sees his doom. 3. *Oklahoma*—Laurie is the heroine—Pore Jud, the villain, is her dream. 4. *War and Peace*—Andrey dreams of Natasha. 5. *Beauty and the Beast*. 6. *A Christmas Carol*—Scrooge is the miser. 7. *Jane Eyre*—One of her many ominous dreams. 8. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. 9. *Through the Looking Glass*—Alice is the heroine. 10. *The Old Testament*—Pharaoh's perplexing dream is correctly interpreted by Joseph. 11. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. 12. *Crime and Punishment*—Rashkoinikov is the hero. 13. *Great Expectations*—Pip has the dreams of frustration. 14. *Macbeth*. 15. *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*. 16. *Confessions of an Opium Eater*—In which Thomas de Quincy records his experiences while using drugs. 17. *Winnie the Pooh*. 18. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*—Jim is the Negro slave. 19. *The Blue Bird*. 20. *Tom Sawyer*—Tom is haunted by Injun Joe.

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